

REDEMPTION
and
HISTORICAL
REALITY

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REDEMPTION and HISTORICAL REALITY

by
Isaac C. Rottenberg

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To the memory
of
MY FATHER
and
MY MOTHER

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PREFACE

During the past decades a veritable flood of theological literature has appeared on the question of history. As this study is added to the swelling stream of books on the subject, it might be well to state from the outset what contribution it seeks to make. The answer is that it is presented primarily as a survey. As such—it is hoped—the book will serve a modest but yet important purpose. The reader will not find an original and fresh exposition on the subject, setting forth *the* Biblical view of history. Rather, an attempt is made to offer a comprehensive study on some of the main theological approaches that have been followed in recent years with respect to this perplexing question. The many quotes and references have been included not as a show of scholarship but to serve this purpose of the survey, and it is hoped that they will render special assistance to students who are not yet acquainted with the literature.

The idea of *Heilsgeschichte* is a key concept in this study. An analysis of this concept will, the author believes, lead one into some of the most central issues and controversies in contemporary theology. It confronts one with all the questions concerning historical knowledge, but beyond that, it ultimately leads one to the question of how redemption in Christ affects historical reality. The theme “Holy Spirit and history,” therefore, runs throughout the book.

This work is offered as an ecumenical study. So often, courses on contemporary theology in Protestant seminaries deal with a few “big names” on the present-day theological scene, without reference to other traditions. I do not claim that the treatment of

the material is balanced in every respect, for it could be called biased by virtue of the fact that some positions receive attention far beyond others, not to speak of the imbalance involved in the omission of some positions altogether. Decisions must be made in the writing of a study like this, and we would not all make the same ones. Nevertheless, I hope that the total structure of the book will contribute to the ecumenical conversation in our day.

I am grateful that I could write this book while serving a busy suburban parish. A closer association with the circles of academic scholarship would undoubtedly have benefited the present work greatly. The temptation is always great for the man in the parish to limit himself to pastoral concerns and administrative functions, and to leave theology to the experts. More than once during the past two years have I felt inclined to follow this path. However, how fatal will the estrangement between the parish and the realm of academic theology prove to be! It will be a sad day indeed when the pastor and the professor have little to say to each other.

While recognizing, in general, my indebtedness to countless people and their contributions, I wish to mention a few people in particular. Dr. D. Ivan Dykstra, head of the philosophy department at Hope College, Holland, Michigan, first stimulated my interest in the questions of history. There are certain things one cannot teach, but I hope that I have learned something from his fairness as a scholar. The life with the people in our parish has been an inspiration to me, and so has the genuine ecumenical fellowship with concerned Christians in this suburban area, who have faced up to the shallowness of statistical success and have found the freedom to seek theological truth together and to speak it in love. Finally and foremost, I owe a great debt of gratitude to my wife, Malwina, who has faithfully served in the dual capacity of my wife and the mother of our five children and as my private secretary.

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INTRODUCTION

To put the issue in a sentence: What have the events which occurred in Palestine over nineteen hundred years ago to do with the events which are occurring in the world today?

—J. E. Fison, *The Christian Hope*, p. 5.

A book published in recent years bears the interesting title *The Christian Doctrine of History*.¹ This is a terminology to which we are quite unaccustomed. In the traditional dogmatic studies one will look in vain for such a locus. The author is not claiming any finality for his views, as if the title were meant to imply that his own theological formulations constitute *the* Christian doctrine of history. He is merely suggesting that the many new insights that have been gained on this question during the past decades justify the treatment of the Christian view of history as a distinct locus of theology—not a *separate* locus, for as the author rightly points out, the study of a particular doctrinal question should always take place “in organic union with the whole corpus of the Christian faith.”² Dr. McIntyre states his case as follows: “The many new things which are being said in our time concerning history in its relation to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ—they have formed the dominant themes in British and American theology if not also in continental theology since World War II—suggest that the time has come for the more concise definition of what we may call ‘the Christian doctrine of history.’ ”³

We find the same trend of thought elsewhere. The Reformed

Church in the Netherlands, for instance, has since the last war manifested a renewed confessional life, which in turn has led to an attempt to express the faith of the church in confessional formulations that address themselves to the contemporary world. Some years prior to the publication of Dr. McIntyre's book, the General Synod of this church adopted a draft statement of a new confession that distinguishes itself from traditional creeds in that, among other things, it contains a separate article on "history."⁴ The opening sentences of this article read as follows: "Because of our faith in the Christ who has come, and in the future consummation in the Kingdom of God, we look upon the events in time, not as the arbitrary play of free forces, nor as the unbreakable decree of fate, but as the arena of God's blessed rule, as the history which extends to the destiny determined by him. God makes all the world events to contribute to the completion of his plan of redemption."⁵ This draft statement has not become an official creed of this church, but nevertheless, the important thing is that the idea of a Christian doctrine of history has found explicit expression in a confessional formulation that exercises a great influence in that particular Christian communion.

In many Christian circles there has been a growing conviction in recent times that the Biblical witness implies a definite interpretation of history, and much theological labor has been expended during the past decades in attempts to explore and delineate these implications. The literary output has been substantial, and there are many indications that the end is not yet. The question of history remains a live and frequently perplexing issue in theology today.

It is almost universally recognized at present that the problem of history is not merely that of getting the facts straight. Christopher Dawson has remarked that "if history has no end except the collection of facts for their own sake, it becomes merely an intellectual pastime, like stamp-collecting."⁶ In other words, one must move from fact to interpretation; the question of meaning must be asked. And as soon as that is done, one becomes involved in the realm of faith and confession! This is true not only of the Christian but of all who seek to formulate an interpretation of the totality of the historical movements. "There is no concrete

interpretation of history without faith," Paul Tillich once affirmed,⁷ and as a further commentary on this statement we could quote the words of Reinhold Niebuhr, that "history in its totality and unity is given a meaning by some kind of religious faith in the sense that the concept of meaning is derived from ultimate presuppositions about the character of time and eternity which are not the fruit of detailed analyses of historical events."⁸

As has been stated over and over again in recent literature, the belief in progress was a confession as much as the belief in providence. Whether history is subordinated to nature and interpreted in terms of ever recurring cycles, or whether world history is seen from the perspective of human freedom, and—to use Carlyle's phrase—is regarded as "the biography of great men," in both cases one deals with a fundamental faith. The conflict between the church's proclamation concerning the approaching Kingdom of God and the Marxist proclamation concerning the inevitable triumph of the proletariat and the resultant kingdom of the classless society is at heart a clashing of beliefs.

It is indeed easy to understand why, in the contemporary crises, the church has felt itself compelled to reflect more rigidly on the meaning of history and to state more concisely what the Christian faith has to say about its course and the destiny of the world. Many theologians would agree with Prof. John Marsh that "the discerning of the times is not a chronological matter, though it has chronological consequences," but it is "a theological matter having eschatological consequences."⁹ The term "theology of history" has gained wider currency than McIntyre's phrase "the Christian doctrine of history." Others among the contemporary theological writers would insist that we must also speak of a "Christian philosophy of history." Much depends on what one means by a particular term.

McIntyre, for instance, stresses that his definition of history does not provide one with a philosophy of history "if it is meant thereby that we have conceived of history as a rationally coherent whole."¹⁰ He explains that he uses the phrase "'doctrine' of history" primarily in order not to prejudge the question of the unitariness of history.¹¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, too, is reluctant to

speak of a "Christian philosophy of history," because he suspects that "a philosophy will reduce the antinomies, obscurities, and the variety of forms in history to a too simple form of intelligibility."¹² Yet he adds that "a Christian theology of history is not an arbitrary construct. It 'makes sense' out of life and history."¹³ In other words, we frankly admit that our points of reference are not gained by a mere empirical analysis of the observable "facts," but are based on "revelation" apprehended by faith. But faith, although "making sense" out of life and history, does not provide us with a view of history as a neat, rationally coherent system. Hence Niebuhr's preference for the term "theology of history."

The Roman Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain distinguishes the two on their respective points of view and emphasis. According to him, the theology of history is centered on the Kingdom of God and the history of salvation. It is concerned with both the development of the world and the development of the church, but from the point of view of the development of the church. The philosophy of history, on the other hand, is centered on the world and the history of civilization. It also is concerned with both the development of the church and the development of the world, but from the point of view of the development of the world.¹⁴

Others, again, would hold that one ought to move from the Christian theology of history to a Christian philosophy of history, or at least to considerations and deductions that might be regarded as going beyond the realm of what is commonly referred to as "Biblical theology." The Dutch scholar H. Berkhof, for instance, states in his very valuable work on the theme "Christ the meaning of history"¹⁵ that he has sought to remain as close as possible to the vicinity of the so-called Biblical theology, but that on the other hand he is of the opinion that, in order to do full justice to the Biblical data themselves, one must be prepared to move in the direction of some sort of Christian philosophy of history. He assures us that he is not afraid of the idea of such a philosophy, and that he believes that all who wish to engage in the theology of history ought not to be overly reluctant to enter into that field, but that nevertheless he has avoided the

term in his book because of his desire to stay as close as possible to the sphere of theology proper.¹⁶

Another Dutch theologian, A. A. van Ruler, some aspects of whose theology will be discussed more fully in the fourth chapter of this study, would be less inclined to avoid the term. He holds that all genuinely Christian confession contains elements which, when contemplated in their wider implications, will lead one into the sphere of the philosophy of history, which he regards to be—by virtue of both its origin and its nature—the most Christian of all philosophical disciplines.¹⁷ The confession of the God of the Bible, the Lord who elects and establishes a covenant with his people, who enters into historical existence and makes his name to dwell in Israel, who has come in Jesus Christ and has fulfilled all things, and who in the power of the Spirit creates the church and its worldwide apostolic ministry—in short, the confession of the God who is redeeming the world and establishing his Kingdom—is, Van Ruler claims, the true origin of the concept of history as it has developed in our culture.¹⁸ The revelation itself has made existence historical, and has brought forth the vision of the meaningful and purposeful development of world history.

We thus find a variety in terminology, and upon further reflection we discover that this is indicative of an even greater variety of interpretation among those who hold in common the basic view that the Christian faith furnishes us with perspectives on the course of history that “make sense” out of what otherwise might appear to be an interplay of meaningless forces. Rarely do Christian thinkers today attempt to make “sense” in the sense of a rationally coherent “system.” The meaning of history is confessed, which is something quite different from having it explained. The mystery remains, because for faith the mystery of sin is real, and so, above all, is the mystery of the Kingdom. They are both part of the drama of history, which is the struggle of God with the world.

The Christian believer, as is already clearly implied by the designation itself, is distinguished from all the other believers by the fact that he affirms in faith that in Jesus Christ, God has given

the supreme revelation of himself as the redeemer. The question of meaning is answered in terms of salvation, and in the Bible itself this is expressed in terms of both "the new creature" and "the new heaven and the new earth" as the promise of the consummation of all things. But specifically what does this mean? How are these concepts to be incorporated into a Christian theology—or a Christian philosophy of history? Many serious attempts have been made in recent years to clarify this question.

How does redemption affect historical existence? The moment one raises this question, one is inescapably confronted with the most central, and at the same time one of the most perplexing, questions of theology: How does one conceive of salvation? What precisely is the redemptive reality that has been revealed to us in Jesus Christ and that becomes the renewing power in the world? Without seeking to solve the mystery, how can we speak about the mystery? Berkhof, in his aforementioned book, speaks about history A.D. in terms of an analogy of what has taken place in Christ.¹⁹ History is understood from the perspective of both the cross and the resurrection. He finds an analogy of the cross in the continued reality of sin and the powers of corruption, as well as in the suffering of the congregation of Christ in the world, which, although it is not seen as an atoning suffering, is regarded as a sharing in the sufferings of Christ himself. But he also sees signs and manifestations of the reality and the power of the resurrection. A new power is effectually at work in history. Central among the signs is the mission of the church. The proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom is interpreted as a historical force of the first order, which has had a molding influence on the cultural development of the Western world.

There are those persons according to whom this concept of analogy does not say enough, and those for whom it says too much. The former claim that the doctrine of the incarnation, with its view of the union of the divine and human natures in Christ, suggests a more ontological view of the renewing reality in the world, which cannot be adequately expressed by the term "analogy" but which needs such concepts as "transfiguration" or even "deification." The latter, on the other hand, would assert that the Bible proclaims a personal salvation that can be best

described by the term "forgiveness," and that is appropriated in the existential experience of faith.

We are thus faced with a double complication in the modern theological debate on this question. The debate among those who agree in their view that the Biblical witness leads to some kind of theology of history, but who disagree on the manner in which this ought to be worked out, is complex enough in itself. But of late their basic premise, namely, that a theology of history is possible and legitimate, has itself been challenged by those who hold that the Bible does not intend to imply anything of the kind. They, too, seek to develop a theology of the cross and the resurrection as far as their view of personal redemption is concerned, but when it comes to their philosophy of history and culture, they are predominantly theologians of the cross.

Karl Löwith's book *Meaning in History* is a good example. The title is significant. He does not speak of the meaning of history, nor does he deny that the Christian faith furnishes one with meaning in life, but the meaning *in* history is achieved by means of a redemption *from* history. He maintains that he cannot discover in the Gospels the slightest hint of a "philosophy of history," but only "a scheme of redemption through Christ and from history."²⁰ History remains "the tragic human comedy of all times,"²¹ and, asserts Löwith, "nothing else than the life and death of Jesus Christ, the 'Suffering Servant,' who was deserted and crucified, can be the standard of a Christian understanding of the world's history."²²

Thus, history is seen as, in essence, the story of power and pride, sin and death. The idea of a Christian civilization is regarded as a contradiction in terms. World history after Christ is believed to be qualitatively not different from the history before Christ.²³ For the Christian, history is declared to be "a discipline of suffering,"²⁴ or, according to a presumably Augustinian thought, "a divinely appointed pedagogy, operating mainly through suffering."²⁵

Much the same mood can be found in the writings of Nicolas Berdyaev. The following paragraphs will deal very briefly with some aspects of his philosophy, despite the fact that he was quite emphatic in his affirmations that he was not a theologian, but

rather a representative of a free religious philosophy.²⁶ Yet, he was profoundly influenced by the Christian tradition, and, be it in very untraditional terms, he could write with passion about the coming of Christ—the Divine Man—and the mystery of redemption through his sufferings and expiatory blood.²⁷ Furthermore, Berdyaev was a profoundly existentialist philosopher, who, with some justification, regarded himself as more of an existentialist thinker than Heidegger or Jaspers.²⁸ He looked upon himself as an existentialist in the tradition of Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Dostoevsky. Finally, the question of history was always at the heart of his philosophical concerns. With his whole being he struggled with that problem.

In the second chapter of this study we shall deal rather extensively with the existentialist interpretation of the New Testament and the implied concept of history, especially as found in the writings of Rudolf Bultmann. Now, there are many differences between this German Lutheran exegete and Berdyaev, the Russian philosopher in the Orthodox tradition (not in a dogmatic sense, but nevertheless in the sense of fundamental religious experience and outlook). Yet, there are interesting parallels, and some of the things said by Bultmann today were said more profoundly and more intensely by Berdyaev before him. It is for this reason that we deal with Berdyaev in this introduction.

The idea of the exegesis of an authoritative text was far removed from Berdyaev's thought. The only revelation he recognized was the revelation that comes from within. He takes his starting point from a basic intuition concerning reality. For him, life is at heart not a "divinely appointed pedagogy" but a struggle for freedom. Here Berdyaev finds the primary reality: in freedom, creativity, and ecstasy. Time and time again he expresses this passionately. "The primary reality, the original life, is creative will, creative passion, creative fire."²⁹ This truth is known best through original intuition, before the process of rational reflection and objectification has set in. The subjective and personalistic world is to Berdyaev the only ultimate world.³⁰ His philosophy is basically not a detached analysis, but *witness*. He could state that his vocation was to proclaim not a doctrine but a vision,³¹ and that in discussing philosophical problems he

chose "the method of witness, of intuitive description, and of characterization."³² Berdyaev, like so many existentialist writers, calls modern man back to himself, unless he lose his soul in the world of things, the realm of objectification, which in the end will devour him and make him, too, into an object. "My thought," he says, "reflects a revolt of human personality against an illusory and crushing objective 'world harmony,' and the objective social order, against any form of investing the objective world order with a sacrosanct character."³³

The "passion for freedom" was indeed an extreme experience in this thinker's life. Not only did he look upon the social order and its structures of authority as a constant threat to the expression of free creativity, but all community and even family ties were considered as being in conflict with true freedom.³⁴ Sexuality was interpreted in terms of the Fall, a view not uncommon in the Orthodox tradition.³⁵ He always remained a stranger to the world of nature and history, for they belong to the world of "outwardness," in which the primary experience has been broken up into the dichotomy of subject and object. The Fall, to him, meant loss of freedom, and this in turn leads to estrangement.³⁶ In short, Berdyaev was consumed by a burning longing for the transcendent, and this inspired his eschatological philosophy. "In my opinion," he stated, "the central thought of eschatological philosophy is connected with the interpretation of the Fall as objectification, and the end as the final and decisive victory over objectification."³⁷

The final solution cannot be found within the confines of space and time; it will need the end. And yet, there is an anticipatory realization of the end in the present through a genuine existential experience. The existential is the real! This does not mean that for Berdyaev the objective world is unreal. It is as real as the Fall. He held that we experience the world this way because of the exteriorization of man, man's surrender of freedom, his subjection to the conditions of space and time, causality and rationalization. This whole process, he believed, reaches its limits in the power of technology, which turns man himself into an object, a nameless thing.³⁸

What, then, is the meaning of existence in time and the history

of the world? Berdyaev has often stated that he regarded himself primarily a philosopher of history. But we must keep in mind that he distinguished different kinds of time. According to his views, history in the sense of world history, or the course of events, takes place in fallen time. There is false time and there is true time. The latter is part of eternity and has escaped corruption.³⁹ How bitterly he felt about his life in "common time." It filled him with "painful disgust," caused him "intense and unspeakable pain."⁴⁰ "Man," he cries out, "is nailed to the cross of time with its tormenting contradictions, and he cannot bear its apparently unending, relentless course."⁴¹

Thus we find in Berdyaev, as we did in Löwith, history described in terms of tragic comedy, and the former goes beyond that, in that he writes about life in history as a disease. This life is broken up into past, future, and the illusory point in between called present. How can finite time be conquered? This has always been the motivating question of Berdyaev's philosophy. He believed in that victory, and to that faith he witnessed. His eschatology finds its ground and being in his own existential experience. As he affirmed it himself, "the philosophy of history is . . . that of an afterworld rather than that of empirical realities. . . . The real philosophy of history is that of the triumph of authentic life over death; it is the communion of man with another, everlastingly broader and richer reality than that in which he is empirically immersed."⁴²

As we indicated earlier, eternity does enter time and can be experienced in it. This happens in ecstasy, the creative and transcending act, in that freedom which liberates man from cosmic and historical time, and transplants him, as it were, in existential time. It occurs in "a flash of the present," often referred to in religious literature as "the Moment." Ecstasy means transcendence! It alone is the true answer to the evil of objectification and the sin of immersion into the world of nature and history. Life filled Berdyaev with "loathing," but he loved ecstasy. Yes, indeed, because he believed that "creative ecstasy is a way out from the time of this world, historical time and cosmic time—it takes place in existential time."⁴³

Is only the Moment important, then? No, the future is, not as

the future of the world, but as the end of this world and the coming of the new world. The inner significance of universal history is seen, in the last analysis, as its tragedy, its failure. This failure of world history Berdyaev regarded as sacred, for it helps to demonstrate that the higher calling of both man and mankind is superhistorical.⁴⁴ The problem of history cannot be resolved in history itself; its end can be realized only outside its framework, i.e., superhistory, where time will be no more.⁴⁵ Thus will come about the reintegration of terrestrial and celestial history.

This, then, is for Berdyaev meaning in history—to know that the meaning of history is found solely in the fact that it comes to an end.⁴⁶ That end is the prerequisite for the salvation of the person; there is no fulfillment of personhood within its limits. To know this, and to give assent to it, is to possess a saving knowledge of the truth. We are saved for another world, the eternal world, which starts here and now but which can find its consummation only in the world to come. This religious philosophy of history sees a great significance in the incarnation—the coming of the God-man, but certainly not as a sign and a seal of the divine acceptance of this world, the realm of space and time, of nature and history, which God is redeeming and is re-creating into his Kingdom.

We have quoted rather extensively from some works of Berdyaev that deal more specifically with the problem of history. He himself disliked very much to see his books quoted, because he always felt an intense dissatisfaction with his own formulation of what can scarcely be expressed at all. One does not do justice to a person's total philosophy in a brief sketch of a few aspects. Our purpose was a limited one, namely, to indicate a mood, a feeling about history that shows similarities to the one we will later find in the works of those who propose an existentialist interpretation of the New Testament by way of a new understanding of history. As we stated before, there are substantial differences between Bultmann and Berdyaev. But in Bultmann, too, we will find an eschatological faith that finds its origin in an existential experience. Here too we will find the emphasis on the subject-object dichotomy and on existential time as the moment of decision in freedom. Yes, we even find the notion of fulfillment

through failure, for Bultmann considers the Old Testament fulfilled in its inner contradiction, its miscarriage (*Scheitern*).⁴⁷ In this "miscarriage," he believes, lies a promise, for it teaches man to look away from the course of history to the eschatological and supramundane reality that is realized in the existential encounter.

The Biblical idea of fulfillment has always played an important role in the traditional theologies of history. Bultmann now raises the question whether we may legitimately speak of prophecy and fulfillment. "What is the purpose of speaking of it?" he asks. "Is it not a superfluous speculation—a religious philosophy of history?"⁴⁸ Such speculation he and his disciples wish to avoid at all cost, for as far as they are concerned, it would mean, to use the words of Carl Michalson, "to allow the Christian way to yield to the derived and fabricated devices of its cultural stepchild, philosophy of history."⁴⁹ The Christian way and the course of history are thus contrasted. A theology of history or a philosophy of history receives the indictment of fabrication, something quite different from interpretation of the revelation.

We now finally raise the question, Is it not true that Christ is the end of history, and that his cross means judgment upon all human history? Many among those who defend the legitimacy and the necessity of the formulation of a theology of history would answer this question in the affirmative. In a real sense the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ signalize the end of history. The victory over sin and death has been gained; the Kingdom has come near. But, these theologians would add, this end is also a beginning. We are not freed from terrestrial history in order that we might find salvation in the realm of inwardness. As Berkhof expressed it in the previously mentioned book, there is also postponement of judgment, the creation of a new history, the dispensation of grace and patience—and this not only as a preparation of the Kingdom but as a preliminary statute and embodiment of the Kingdom. This, he believes, is the meaning of the rule of Christ, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the creation of the church and its worldwide mission.⁵⁰ The interim—the course of history between the ascension and the Parousia—receives a new meaning, because it is qualified by the presence

of the risen Christ. The drama of the struggle between God and man goes on, until the final manifestation of the victory which is in him.

In the preceding pages we have indicated in substance the major questions and problems with which we shall be dealing in the following sections of this study. We shall begin with an analysis of the concept of *Heilsgeschichte*, which plays such a prominent role in many theologies of history. We shall then proceed to survey the reaction to this concept in its traditional form and the attempt at reinterpretation by means of an existentialist theology. Following that, we seek to answer the question, What alternatives to this existentialist theology are offered by the "Catholic tradition," with its incarnational-sacramental approach to reality? Finally, we shall discuss the theologies of some other scholars in the Protestant tradition who might be considered as seeking a *via media* between the two previous positions. We shall conclude our study with some very inconclusive remarks.

I. HEILSGESCHICHTE:

some perspectives and problems

Divine providence not only looks after individuals as it were privately but also after the whole human race publicly. . . . How he deals with the human race God has willed to be handed down through history and prophecy.

—Augustine, *De Vera Religione*, XXV, 46.

A. THE IDEA OF "HEILSGESCHICHTE" IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the past decades the concept of *Heilsgeschichte* has gained a certain prominence in the theological world. Sometimes one is inclined to speak of a measure of popularity. It is one of those foreign terms which quite frequently are left untranslated in books in the English language. This undoubtedly is due in part to the fact that it is quite difficult to find a satisfactory English equivalent. One suspects, however, that there is more to it than that. In many circles the term "*Heilsgeschichte*" came to be used with an air of familiarity and self-evidence, because the term was adjudged to be self-explanatory, and it was thought that everyone who used it meant the same thing by it.

Actually, this is far from true. In the first place, as we shall have ample opportunity to point out in the following pages, authors who make use of the concept of *Heilsgeschichte* fill it with a variety of contents and meanings. On the other hand, there are those who are calling for the discontinuance of its use altogether. Instead of welcoming the aforementioned prominence and popularity of the concept, they are seeking to show its problematical nature and are questioning its usefulness as a

theological category. In this chapter we intend to set forth very briefly how the concept developed; why, soon after it came into its own in the nineteenth century, it fell into decline; and what the basic points at issue are between those who in recent days have defended it as a useful and even necessary theological category and those who have attacked it as a confusing and antiquated concept.

It is not difficult to discern why the idea of *Heilsgeschichte* came to have such an appeal in many theological circles across the world. The reason in essence was this: the concept expressed a view of revelation that is *dynamic*. The God of the Bible is portrayed as the "God who acts." The message of the Bible is characterized as witness, as proclamation of the *magnalia Dei*—the mighty and saving deeds of the Lord. G. Ernest Wright's definition of Biblical theology as "the confessional recital of the redemptive acts of God,"¹ presupposing history as the primary medium of revelation, has gained wide acceptance. But it is not our concern at present whether the above definition is an adequate description of the task of theology. The point is that the underlying view of revelation has exercised a tremendous influence in recent theological literature.

For centuries, as John Baillie, among others, has correctly pointed out in his book *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought*, revelation was defined as the communication of a certain body of truths which in part could be discovered by human reason, but which could be fully grasped only through authoritatively presented information. The latter was regarded as having been accomplished in the Bible. Over against this rather static and intellectualistic concept of revelation, which tends to look upon the Scriptures as a storehouse of timeless truths and a system of doctrinal propositions to which one must give assent in order to be considered a man of faith, a dynamic-historical view of revelation emerged.

"God does not give us information by communication," Baillie states very succinctly. "He gives us himself in Communion."² In other words, God reveals himself *in action*; revelation comes to us through certain events. Not, some would add hastily, through all events or "through no event in its bare character as

occurrence, but only as men are enabled by the Spirit of God to apprehend and receive its revelatory power."³

In this connection it ought to be pointed out that for several centuries already, evangelical scholars had been working on the development of a theology of redemptive history. There was an intense interest in God's historical dealings with man, for instance, among the circles of eighteenth-century Pietism. Sometimes the origins of this theological approach are sought much farther back, even as far back as the theology of Irenaeus, with its emphasis on the integral relationship between the Old and the New Testaments and on the concept of "recapitulation." Here, in addition to the emphasis on the saving presence of God and his redemptive activity, the idea is introduced of a pre-established divine plan, embracing the whole sweep of history from the Creation to the consummation at the end of time. Repeatedly we shall have to call attention to this aspect of the question under discussion.

One could point to other—some more, some less, successful—attempts to formulate a Biblical theology of history, such as Augustine's fifth-century work *De Civitate Dei*, or the twelfth-century theology of Joachim of Fiore, with its teaching that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are manifested in different dispensations that follow one another in successive historical eras. All these theologies embody some view of historical revelation, and, in a sense, a concept of *Heilsgeschichte*. The leading Reformers, too, held to the integral relationship between the Old and the New Testaments against the attempts of the Anabaptists to separate them and to place them in opposition to each other. Preoccupation with other aspects of the gospel and church life, such as personal salvation and pure doctrine, prevented them, however, from working out the implied ideas of redemptive history more explicitly.

We come closer to the modern concept of *Heilsgeschichte*, especially as a corrective against theological intellectualism, in the works of the seventeenth-century scholar Johannes Cocceius and the so-called federal theology. In some important aspects this was a "reaction theology" against post-Reformation Protestant scholasticism. Cocceius was interested in developing a

Biblical-theological dogmatics that would be more closely related to the life of faith, over against the speculative-philosophical tendencies of his day. H. Bavinck has remarked that he exchanged the theological standpoint for the anthropological one.⁴ This is a striking comment that might easily be misunderstood. We must not read this remark in the light of a book like Ludwig Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums*, in which he defended the thesis that the mystery of religion lies in the fact that in essence it is faith in the divinity of man and that therefore all theology is anthropology.

Cocceius certainly did not deny the existence of God, except as he finds embodiment in man. He did, however, take his starting point in the confession of God as he has revealed himself *in his relationship to man*. He refused to speak about God in the abstract. The concept of the covenant—and this is an important insight in our discussion—not the eternal decrees, became the point of departure in his theology.⁵

We are not concerned here with the question of how the seventeenth-century federal theology, with its distinctions between the covenant of nature, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, was worked out in detail. Subsequent critical scholarship without a doubt has made us somewhat uncomfortable in some of the neat schemes of that day. The basic concern and perspective, however, has a modern flavor to it. Rudolf Bultmann, for instance, is one among the many in our day who are constantly stressing the point that one cannot speak about God without simultaneously speaking about one's own existence. We are told that when one speaks about God from faith, i.e., from the God-man relationship, all theology is at the same time anthropology. Sometimes the rather dubious term "the-anthropology" is suggested as a proper expression of the idea that the God of the Bible, in his very nature, is God-with-man, and that, from the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, this is the only way we can speak about him.

In the eighteenth century the revolt against a rigid orthodoxy, which in many cases was an orthodoxy almost exclusively of the head, thus neglecting the needs of the heart, was taken up by the Pietists. The subjective elements in the Christian faith were

stressed more emphatically than in the preceding Scholasticism. Experience—the personal encounter with God—was considered more important than merely correct doctrinal statements, although the latter were not regarded as insignificant. In this same period an interest arose in viewing the Biblical revelation basically in terms of the history of God's concern with the world. In other words, the dynamic-historical aspects of revelation were stressed, both in the sense of a personal encounter with God and in the sense of a pattern of the history of revelation which encompasses God's dealings with the world from the Creation to the consummation. The name of Bengel and his expositions on the *ordo temporum* in particular come to mind here.

The nineteenth century was "the century of history," and, as Gustav Weth has pointed out, it was also the century of theologies of *Heilsgeschichte*.⁶ The emphasis now falls on such elements as the Kingdom, the covenant, the relationship of the Testaments, the various divine dispensations, the Second Adam, the fullness of time, the consummation, and the new humanity. We must keep in mind that by this time the battle was being fought on two fronts. The theology of historical revelation is set over against the rationalism of Scholastic orthodoxy and the rationalism of the Enlightenment, with its natural theology of *Vernunftwahrheiten*.⁷ The central feature of this kind of theology remains the same: the affirmation of the dynamic and historical nature of the revelation. God has spoken, and his word is deed. God has acted on our behalf, and the witness to his saving deeds comes to us in the Scriptures.

The great exponents of a theology of redemptive history in the nineteenth century were J. Beck, J. C. K. von Hofmann, and K. Auberlen. But there were many other, though lesser, figures. Weth, in his aforementioned book, has presented a systematic analysis of some of the main features of this theological movement. Some of them, which are particularly relevant for our discussion of the contemporary scene, must be stated here briefly.

First, let us consider the attitude toward Scripture. We mentioned already that the Bible is seen primarily as witness to God's mighty and redeeming acts. To put it negatively, the Bible is not regarded as an oracle book or as a collection of dogmatic

proof texts.⁸ The deed-nature of the revelation is strongly emphasized. The contrast which these people wanted to put forth is sometimes expressed in the phrase that "*Tatsachen*, not *Lehrsätzen*—deeds, not doctrines—form the core of the revelation."

Thus the Bible is incorporated in the dynamic view of revelation so predominant in all theologies of *Heilsgeschichte*. Revelation in the primary sense is understood as presence of the living God who in a saving way is dealing with the world. The Bible is seen as witness to this reality of revelation, and as such it is itself a moment—one of the central moments—in God's redeeming works.

The nineteenth-century theologians of *Heilsgeschichte* formed basically a conservative wing in the theological world of that time. Several of these scholars, however, were quite willing to acknowledge the legitimacy of grammatical and historical criticism, as long as the essential nature of the Biblical revelation as witness was kept in mind. On the other hand, it is true that continued critical research eventually made revisions in some of their favored theological structures imperative. It became impossible to maintain a number of the neat and schematic patterns which enthusiastic theologians of *Heilsgeschichte* thought they had discovered in the Scriptures. However this may be, their basic insight into the nature of the revelation has proved fruitful for later theological developments.

Second, let us consider their views on personal faith. This is important, for in these latter days the idea of a theology of *Heilsgeschichte* is being attacked particularly by those who have strong existentialist tendencies in their own theology. The basic question, then, is this: What emphasis is placed on the personal and existential elements of faith in a theology that devotes so much attention to the great historical patterns of God's dealings with the world which it claims to have found in the Scriptures?

Weth has some interesting things to say on this question. In the first place, it must be pointed out that in this type of theology the individual, with his mystical experiences or his pious feelings, does not occupy the central place. As a matter of fact, the emphasis falls more upon the church than upon the individ-

ual member. Then the church itself is placed in a larger context, namely, the context of the Kingdom of God. The church is not considered an end in itself! Bengel spoke of the "interim church." The church, too, is a moment—be it a central and extended moment—in God's redemptive dealings with the world. However, in this kind of theology of history, we are called to look beyond the church. Our vision of faith is supposed to encompass humanity, yes, the cosmos. All theologians of *Heilsgeschichte* are universalists, according to Weth,⁹ i.e., beyond the church they see the Kingdom, and they seek to incorporate the New Testament emphasis on *all things* into their theological vision. With this concept we shall repeatedly be concerned in the following pages.

At this point we want to remember what was stated before, namely, that these nineteenth-century theologians of *Heilsgeschichte* were to some extent dependent on the work of the eighteenth-century Pietists, people who did not want to see the head emphasized to the exclusion of the heart. In other words, from the preceding paragraph it ought not to be concluded that these men considered personal faith and the mystical experience as unimportant or irrelevant. Far from it! However, the conversion experience and the mystical communion with God were not regarded as the end of redemption, but rather as also a moment in God's redemptive dealings with the world, namely, as the point where the Spirit of the historically acting God touches the heart.

We noticed this combination before when we said that in such a dynamic view of revelation the personal and the historical aspects both play an important role, without the one annulling the other. After all, it is the believer who, in a personal encounter, has experienced the reality of the revelation—who has met God, who knows the true nature of the historical revelation as the presence of God. From this living faith, which is rooted in the witness of Scripture and is made real in us through the work of the Spirit, the believer confesses God's re-creative work in the whole world.

It sounds so contemporary when we hear Von Hofmann say: "The historical is not a reality which is merely outside of my experience, which I learn to know and which will also bear some

fruits for my life, but remains a reality that surrounds me. The theologian does not deal with God on the one side and with man on the other side, but he deals with God in his relationship to man, and with man in his relationship to God."¹⁰ It sounds like a statement from an existentialist theology. Yet, it comes from a theology of *Heilsgeschichte*. These writers would be astonished at the thought that these two theological perspectives must be seen in contrast to each other. And yet, as we shall see later, this is precisely what some scholars today strongly feel is the case.

These nineteenth-century theologians of *Heilsgeschichte* constituted a valiant attempt on the part of evangelical scholarship to maintain a truly Biblical theology in the face of the onslaught of the prevailing rationalism, which had elevated reason to the position of universal arbiter in all things theological. They formed in essence a protest against the spirit of the age. Nevertheless, they themselves sought to incorporate fundamental insights of the newer knowledge into their theological system. As a matter of fact, questions have been raised whether their use of the concept of organic development did not display too great an enthusiasm for current philosophical trends. However this may be, their intentions were clear, and in many ways laudable. The historical approach could not be ignored, nor could it merely be fought; it had to be put—these men believed—into the context of a Biblical theology. This they tried to do.

In the end they lost out. Why? It could be pointed out, as we have done already, that subsequent critical scholarship showed quite convincingly the questionable nature of some of the neat and harmonious schemes to which the Biblical message had been made to conform. Furthermore, there proved to be such a variety among the proposed schemes! Historical criticism was a factor. But the real issue went much deeper than that. The question of history, especially as the problem of historical knowledge, had been a perplexing one for several centuries. How can historical knowledge lead to certainty?

History had become increasingly a theological problem. The theologians of *Heilsgeschichte* tried desperately to provide an

answer and to stem the tide of the onrushing historical positivism. They lost out against a historicism that left no room for any element of *Heilsgeschichte* whatsoever. The whole concept of historical revelation in the traditional sense of presence and saving activity of God became extremely problematical. We shall now have to trace very briefly the growing tension between historical knowledge and faith in the modern era, and then we shall present an analysis of historicism, especially as it was developed in the works of Ernst Troeltsch.

B. HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE QUEST FOR CERTAINTY

Ever since the Renaissance there developed a growing and deepening awareness that history poses a theological problem. As was stated already, this is, in a very real sense, the problem of historical *knowledge*. How can one know with certainty? At the beginning of the modern philosophical era we find Descartes. "The dream of Descartes," in the words of Jacques Maritain, was "to give to men . . . 'universal science' embracing all things knowable in his perfect specific unity—the *science*."¹¹ This science is to be attained through reason alone.

Descartes, in his search for reliable knowledge, took his starting point in himself as a thinking (and doubting!) person. *Cogito ergo sum!* One could also say that Descartes sought his starting point in some form of *immediacy*. The reason is quite clear: this kind of knowledge alone can be considered firsthand knowledge. Behind this attempt to arrive at certain knowledge is the Renaissance revolt against all knowledge based on external authority and other people's opinions. We are dealing with a venturesome movement, one that was not satisfied with the solutions of traditionalism and dogmatism.

In this basic approach one finds a great reluctance to put one's reliance on historical knowledge. Descartes, for instance, perceived clearly that in the realm of historical knowledge one is inevitably dependent on authorities. These authorities may be designated as "the sources," but in essence they remain other people's reports on what has happened. Does this not imply that

historical knowledge is in the very nature of the case second-hand knowledge and often inexact? Hence Descartes's preoccupation with the exact and natural sciences.

When the Renaissance had its own rebirth in the Enlightenment, the problem of history emerged with greater urgency and intensity than ever. The Enlightenment produced historical research in the modern sense of the word, namely, as a scientific exploration and chronicle of the past. This historical research meant, above all, *critical* research. As Kant made quite clear, this was the age of criticism to which all things had to be subjected, and he proceeded to apply the principle to reason itself. Nothing can be accepted on the basis of dogmatism. Nothing can be singled out in an authoritative fashion as being above or beyond criticism. That which is not permitted to be explored critically must be regarded as suspect.

It is a well-known story how eventually the principles of historical criticism were applied as well to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Here, too, the critical scholars finally refused to be restrained by either traditionalism or ecclesiastical dogma. This is not the proper place to trace how in many instances the critics were not as "*voraussetzungslos*"—as free of all dogmatic presuppositions—as they made themselves believe and liked others to believe, and how in their revolt against traditional dogmatism they were often quite unaware of their own, as, for example, in the case of an uncritical naturalism. The point is that after the initial skirmishes the legitimacy of the historicocritical approach came to be almost universally accepted in the Christian community.

The historical method called for some revisions in the then current views concerning the nature of Scripture as a historical revelation. To some of the great thinkers of that day it seemed that the new knowledge made it imperative to sever all ties between faith and history, lest faith itself be swallowed up in the relativities of historical existence. The question then became: How can the realities of faith be extricated from such entanglements in the realm of the essentially relative? Often cited is Lessing's famous dictum that "accidental historical truths can never become proofs for necessary truths of reason." Lessing,

too, had experienced profoundly the problem of history, for since history means *distance in time*, does not uncertainty increase with each step in time away from the original happening? How can this gap be bridged, or, in other words, how can the problem of *noncontemporaneity* be solved?

The contrast with the natural sciences often seems so compelling. Scientific proof, it is pointed out, is firmly established on the basis of mathematical calculations or laboratory experimentation. In short, it can be demonstrated and will yield certain knowledge which in turn will receive universal acceptance. But what can historical knowledge prove? History is in essence the realm of the relative; it is dependent on sources and the interpretation of sources. It is then frequently concluded that historical knowledge can at best yield probability, not certainty.

Lessing, in his own way, sought some form of immediacy on which to base faith. One could say that he and many of his contemporaries first attempted to escape from the contingencies of history by seeking the foundation of truth in the realm of the timeless rational, that which can always and everywhere be established as valid on the basis of reason alone. It was then further pointed out that the knowledge of faith must be one's own knowledge—part of one's own experience—and not the secondhand knowledge derived from the sources which are in essence someone else's report. It was in this context that Lessing spoke about "the nasty big ditch" which he found it impossible to leap over. A miracle, for example, must be experienced in order to be accepted: it cannot be known through someone else's witness from a distant past.

Despite all attempts of the theologians of *Heilsgeschichte* to counteract the prevalent rationalism and its ahistorical view of revelation, the movement toward a theology of immediacy and inwardness continued and found its culmination in the works of Friedrich Schleiermacher. He took his starting point in the Christian pious self-consciousness, and the witness to the *magnalia Dei* now became a systematic exposition on the religious experiences of man. With derision Schleiermacher attacked the cultured despisers of religion, telling them that they did not even know what true religion is, namely, "to have life and to

know life in immediate feeling," and in this immediacy to receive a sense of and a taste for the Infinite.

Perhaps it is not really correct to accuse Schleiermacher of an absolute subjectivism, since he is in essence talking about the individual and the Christian community who find their life in the relationship with God. It is not true to say that all we have left is man and his feelings. Schleiermacher was speaking about man and his feelings when he is in touch with the Infinite. Nevertheless, the total emphasis of this theology was such that by and large the prophetic and apostolic witness to the great and saving deeds of God in history were completely obscured. No wonder that many people concluded that the Christian faith was in danger of being robbed of its historical basis, and were deeply disturbed about it. Can faith be thus severed from the realm of history?

Ritschl, that great foe of rationalist and mystic alike, made another attempt to call the positivistic-historical method into the service of the Christian faith. Thus was developed the theological movement that subsequently has come to be known as "the quest of the historical Jesus." Historical research cannot know everything, it was felt, but it can know something, and the knowledge it yields is adequate to give some historical basis to the Christian faith and to rescue it from the foibles and the fancies of both a speculative rationalism and a vague mysticism. Thus the world was introduced to the Jesus of history of the Ritschlian school. The "religion about Jesus," which was often regarded as a Pauline invention anyway, could be discarded, but thanks to the careful application of the historical method, it was considered possible to trace the "religion of Jesus," which usually turned out to be a religion of simple trust in the goodness of God the Father and of high moral aspiration. Jesus Christ the Savior became Jesus the great moral teacher.

It is easy to see how this outlook, when it once became widely accepted, would affect the traditional view of *Heilsgeschichte* and historical revelation. History became virtually synonymous with objective historical research. Any reality to which the historical method did not (at least in principle) have access, could not be regarded as historical. Here is the problem. Christian

theology had accepted a kind of history which is confessed, although it could not in the nature of the case be confirmed by scientific research. And even when Biblical history could be traced by the historical method, Christian theology had affirmed as a matter of faith a dimension of the divine intervention and presence that could not be read from the "bare facts" of history. This whole concept of *Heilsgeschichte* in the broadest sense of the word was now challenged by a historicism that left no room whatsoever for any special kind of history that would in principle be beyond the reach of critical and objective research. Thus, after this very fragmentary review, we have returned to where we left off in the previous section. We must now take a closer look at the problem of historicism.

C. HISTORICISM VERSUS "HEILSGESCHICHTE"

In an exchange between Karl Jaspers and Rudolf Bultmann, the former raised the question of Bultmann's dependence on the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. In his reply, Bultmann stated that he did not necessarily accept all the theories of Heidegger, although he was willing to learn something from Heidegger's existentialist analysis. Then Bultmann continued thus: "The fact is that Heidegger attacks a problem with which theologians have grappled since Ernst Troeltsch, namely, the problem of history, which has become more acute for theology with every advance in historical understanding of the Bible."¹²

Bultmann, today, as was Troeltsch before him, is intensely engaged in the question of the Christian faith and modern culture. The true implications of historicism are nowhere better exemplified than in the works of Ernst Troeltsch. In the next chapter we shall present a rather extensive exposition on the manner in which Bultmann, with the aid of the existentialist analysis, seeks to solve the problems left by historicism. First, however, we must discuss in some detail the major thoughts in the works of Troeltsch.

It must be remembered that Troeltsch, who is often portrayed as *the* exponent of historicism, was deeply concerned about the *problems* of historicism, and tried to show the way of

faith as the only possibility of overcoming the threat of relativism which it posed. Troeltsch was not a historical positivist! His major work on the philosophy of history was entitled *Der Historismus und seine Probleme*,¹³ and he wanted to help his readers to overcome these problems. Repeatedly he points out that a historicism under the grip of naturalism will be a bad historicism. He spoke about "the gospel of pure this-worldliness" as it was developed during the first decades of the nineteenth century, and he considered this the coldest era which Christian theology and the philosophy of religion have known for several centuries, because he felt that there was so little sense of the invisible and the mysterious, no concept of the divine goal for history.¹⁴ One can agree with H. Faber's analysis when he concluded that Troeltsch's philosophy of history was a "believing book,"¹⁵ even though one may not share the faith expressed therein.

Ernst Troeltsch lived the problems of historicism with the depth of his being. He was a great historian who continuously struggled with the question of how one could face the fact that historical study had relativized many of our supposed absolutes without falling victim to a complete relativism. As he once stated himself, the central theme of his thought concerned "the relation between the endless movement of the stream of historical life and the need of the human mind to limit and to shape it by means of fixed standards."¹⁶ However, what really remains "fixed" in that great and bewildering spectacle of historical diversity? Are not all our standards, in the final analysis, norms that happen to prevail at a certain time, in a certain place, among certain people? Here is the problem. On the one hand is "the spirit of critical skepticism," and on the other hand is "the demand of the religious consciousness for certainty, for unity, and for peace."¹⁷

The spirit of critical skepticism! Here, in a nutshell, one has the mood of the modern era, the spirit of what Troeltsch called "the modern situation." Can one be a believer and at the same time be a genuinely modern person, who does not seek to escape from the facts by way of an authoritarian dogmatism? All the old

dogmatisms, Troeltsch thought, those of the church as well as those of the old humanism, had become impossible to maintain since our thinking about man, his culture, and his values had become historicized. This Troeltsch saw as the great gift of the Enlightenment, one which he was not willing to abandon.¹⁸

Troeltsch was not only a great historian, but (and perhaps this is always the mark of a truly great historian) he was also a man with a deep interest in theological and philosophical questions. He spent his life studying sociopolitical and cultural movements and raising the question concerning their meaning for the present as well as the future. Historical studies had presented him with a panorama of infinite interrelationships, a *Fluss*—an endless, moving flux of events, an *Ozean des Geschehens*—the ever-rolling waves of becoming in which all is related to all. In this view of historical continuum there was little room for the unique event—a different and special kind of history.

Were the historical method applied to Biblical literature and church history with rigid honesty and scientific objectivity, it would, Troeltsch believed, have an explosive effect and would eventually shatter the old theological approach.¹⁹ Theology in the traditional sense would disappear and *Religionswissenschaft* would take its place. We find this question discussed in an essay entitled "Concerning the Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology," written in 1898, when Troeltsch was thirty-three years old. The old dogmatic method he regarded as out of the question as an option for the modern era, because it sought a solid and firm starting point that would be independent from history and its inherent relativism, and then, on the basis of this point of departure, formulated its absolutes.

As far as Troeltsch was concerned, the Bible was a case in point. The dogmatic theological method had posited it as an authority that transcends history and its contingencies. But what happened when the historical method was applied to this authority? Had it not become evident that the Bible, rather than being a unique literary body, actually had many affinities with the religious literature of the surrounding nations? Studies in comparative religion had yielded some impressive results! Israel's

historical development and cultural life were now studied in the context of the surrounding civilizations. The New Testament was being read in the light of the history of the Roman Empire.

The historical method, which became increasingly totalitarian in its claims, saw no evidence of unique events that were not an integral part of the historical continuum. Troeltsch was quite willing to admit that "the consequence of all this is . . . a certain relativism, a mental complexity, and the possession of a wealth of analogies for all kinds of comparison such as no other period has ever known."²⁰ We must keep in mind that the concept of "analogy," as used by Troeltsch, implies the idea of the essential "sameness" of all historical events.²¹

The result, then, is that, according to this view, a so-called "privileged position" of Christianity becomes untenable. Christianity itself becomes part of the immense interplay of historical forces, a mere movement in the flux of historical events and interrelationships. Like all other history, it is to be considered a development at a certain time, in a certain place among certain people, part of the general cultural history of the world. There are no unique events, no occurrences of absolute and revelatory significance. The history of Israel is part and parcel of the general history of the Middle East, the history of the church part of the history of the Roman Empire—nothing less, nothing more. In sum: everything is part of one overall historical continuum.

Does all this not mean the end of Christian theology in the traditional sense? Troeltsch answered that question in the affirmative. As is well known, he proposed the development of a *religionsgeschichtliche Theologie*, a theology he would prefer not to call liberal, but scientific, and therefore *konfessionslos*²²—free of creedal entanglements. The theological movement he himself inaugurated is often referred to as the "history of religion school." No doubt recent research in the field of comparative religion had a great impact on these scholars. What Troeltsch had in mind was a theology that could be incorporated into an independent and purely scientific philosophy of religion.²³ In essence this means a theology that had abandoned the idea of special revelation in the traditional sense.

Once again we raise the question whether all this must not

inevitably lead to a complete relativism and skepticism. Troeltsch hoped not. On the one hand, he wished to face and to make others face the problems that are inherent in historicism. Historicism does imply, Troeltsch believed, that all one's thinking about man, his culture and his values, becomes historicized, i.e., one looks upon all these realities in the light of the historical continuum, which is a totality of interrelationships that can be traced and explained with the aid of the scientific-historical method. On the other hand, Troeltsch was profoundly aware of the need of the religious consciousness for certainty, unity, and peace, and he sought with all his power to avoid the abyss of absolute skepticism that would end in nihilism. The question of meaning could not be suppressed, for deeply embedded in the thought world of this man remained the belief in meaning. Perhaps we cannot find a universal meaning, because universal history is beyond our grasp. But there can be meaning for us in our own cultural sphere—in the West. "A truth," Troeltsch once remarked reassuringly, "which, in the first instance, is *a truth for us*, does not cease, because of this, to be very Truth and Life."²⁴

Man must act, for to live historically means to live in freedom; it implies a life in decision. This was one of the fundamental convictions Troeltsch held. He perceived that many of the positivist historians had, in effect, naturalized history in their great desire to adjust historical research to the natural sciences and to put it on an equal footing. This Troeltsch regarded to be a bad historicism. He emphasized the role of man, the primary historical agent, and he knew very well that the involvement of man in the historical flux belongs to the stuff of history. He attacked what he called "a purely contemplative view of history,"²⁵ i.e., an objective and detached attitude toward history as if the man of research could ever remain the uninvolved observer. This, he believed, would lead to a paralysis of the will, bottomless relativism, and nihilism. One must ask the question of meaning, and then act in faith, assuming responsibility for the future. Troeltsch generally mentioned Kierkegaard and his concept of the "leap" with appreciation, although he could not follow Kierkegaard into what he adjudged to be the muddled waters of Christian pietism.

The idea of our responsibility for the future implies a *faith*, a faith in the meaningfulness and purposefulness of history—in short, a faith in meaningful becoming. On the basis of such a faith, Troeltsch believed, man could accept certain norms and a cultural ideal, and then act meaningfully in accordance with these. Whence is this faith derived? Can it be based on the constructions of a timeless rationalism? What, then, would protect us against all sorts of imaginings of the human mind? Then there is always the possibility of an authority derived from divine revelation. We have already seen what Troeltsch thought of that idea. No, he reiterated constantly, one must take one's starting point in history itself, and then, in living contact with history, man penetrates into the universal reality that underlies it. Man can do this, Troeltsch believed, because, after all, he is part of this reality and shares in its essential being.

The terminology becomes rather vague when Troeltsch seeks to define the nature of the faith that was within him. Sometimes the language reminds one of speculative idealism, when, for instance, one reads about history as "the inner movement of the divine Spirit in the realm of finiteness,"²⁶ or as a "development of the divine Mind."²⁷

It remains "a matter of faith in the deepest and fullest sense of the word," said Troeltsch,²⁸ but the faith that is left turns out to be a vague mysticism about man's involvement in the All, a feeling concerning man's affinity with the Infinite and the realization of the divine Spirit in the historical process. Consequently, it can be said that Troeltsch, in essence, continued a movement that had been initiated by Schleiermacher.²⁹ Karl Barth has made the interesting remark that it was basically Troeltsch's "return to Schleiermacher that was responsible for the victorious element which was still left in his theology."³⁰

One thing is certain: in this theological approach no room was left for any idea of *Heilsgeschichte* in the usual sense. Troeltsch spoke scornfully of a "pseudo history" that seeks to apply to Biblical history principles different from those applied to other realms. This approach he considered forever judged by "its endless excuses and untruths."³¹ "Everything possible," he once complained, "is called 'historical' and 'event' today, even though

it is a miracle perceived only by faith."³² It is a historical fact that, temporarily, historicism had won out against *Heilsgeschichte*. Faith and history went their separate ways.

D. "HEILSGESCHICHTE" VERSUS HISTORICISM

At the beginning of the twentieth century the prevalent view of the Old Testament was that it contained the story of the religious and cultural development of the people of Israel. The book was regarded mostly as the expression of religious *ideas*. Some scholars discovered a progressive development within the Old Testament from polytheism to what was generally called "ethical monotheism." This was often interpreted in terms of an evolutionary process. By and large there was little awareness that the book might contain a message of genuine relevance to the modern era.

New Testament research was preoccupied with the debate on what could or what could not be known about Jesus of Nazareth by means of scientific-historical studies. Troeltsch observed assuredly that, in his judgment, when all the dust had settled, it would become apparent that Jesus could be retained as the central figure, the source, and the power of the Christian faith, even though the traditional descriptions of him would, of course, have been abandoned by well-informed people.³³ Jesus and Christianity would remain normative, at least *for us* in the sphere of Western culture.³⁴

Much, indeed, has changed in the theological climate since the first decades of this century! As we noticed before, Troeltsch was familiar with the writings of Kierkegaard. He ascribed to his thoughts far greater brilliance than to Ritschl's.³⁵ Little did he or anyone else suspect what role Kierkegaard's thought would play in subsequent philosophical and theological developments. We shall omit a discussion on this now, because this line in our discourse is to be drawn in Chapter IV, when we shall trace the emergence of the early dialectical theology. We shall then see that, although this movement represented a return to a dynamic and existential view of revelation, it was not a return to a theology of *Heilsgeschichte*, but rather another attempt to extricate

the Christian faith from involvement in the contingencies of history. This is the course still strongly pursued by Rudolf Bultmann, although others among the original exponents of the dialectical theology have once again incorporated elements of *Heilsgeschichte* into their theology without adhering to a theology of *Heilsgeschichte* in the strict and systematic sense.

In the meantime, other research was going on which prepared the way for a radical reorientation in Biblical scholarship, and which would once again bring to the forefront the view of the historical nature of the revelation. In this connection we must mention the recent contributions of Old Testament research. H. H. Rowley has entitled one of his books *The Rediscovery of the Old Testament*. He is quite willing to acknowledge the great contributions of nineteenth-century critical scholarship and to admit that in a sense they, too, led to a rediscovery of certain aspects of the Old Testament.³⁶ But at the same time the so-called purely scientific study of the Old Testament and the evolutionistic constructions of its history had tended to obscure the *religious* significance of the Old Testament and consequently its *relevance* for life in the modern era. The rediscovery of its true meaning and message was therefore in a sense a rediscovery of the Old Testament.

It became increasingly recognized that the scientific approach to the Scriptures has its inherent limitations. It is apt to neglect the original intent of the Biblical authors, who were in essence presenting their witness as a confession of faith concerning the great deeds of God's mercy and deliverance which they had experienced in their personal lives and in the history of their nation. The question was therefore raised whether detached and objective scientific-historical research can ever do full justice to an essentially *confessional* document.

A new emphasis was put on the significance of the religious history as recorded in the Old Testament writings. To use some phrases of James M. Robinson, since the view of the relative lateness of the Old Testament historical sources had become widely accepted, it had become quite customary to think of the interpretation by Israel of its past as a "secondary theological interpretation," but the religious rediscovery of the Old Testa-

ment brought out once again "the primacy of 'salvation-history.'" ³⁷ Consequently, such fundamental Old Testament concepts as "election" and "covenant," instead of being regarded as secondary additions, were seen as being at the heart of everything that the Old Testament has to say. These confessional concepts, however, find their source and being, not in man's speculative reasoning, but in the historical experience of Israel, which was later embodied in the inspired prophetic witness. ³⁸ It is no wonder, therefore, that recent Old Testament theologies have put a strong and central emphasis on *Heilsgeschichte*.

The God of the Bible is once again set forth as the living God and the Lord of history. In the concepts of "election" and "covenant" are expressed the initiative of his grace and his Lordship over the destiny of men and nations. It is confessed that God has acted on behalf of his people. He is always portrayed as the coming God, who in his mercy establishes a relationship with his people. In short, he is the God of the exodus and the God of the covenant, the One who leads out and who does not forsake the works of his hands.

In 1933 Walther Eichrodt wrote his *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, and in the preface he stated: "It is high time that the tyranny of historicism in Old Testament studies was broken and the proper approach to our task rediscovered." ³⁹ Eichrodt was performing some pioneer labor when at that time he made the covenant the constitutive concept of his whole Old Testament theology. This reality, he affirmed, is a *Grundbestandteil*—a basic element—in the whole Israelite experience of God; it establishes the *Tatcharakter*—the deed-nature—of the divine revelation. ⁴⁰

A. A. van Ruler has called the covenant "the structure of redemption" as we find it revealed in the Scriptures. ⁴¹ To all kinds of religious individualism this concept of the covenant will always remain somewhat offensive. However, whenever the Bible has not been read primarily in terms of personal religious experience, but rather in terms of the message of the Kingdom, i.e., the historico-eschatological dealings of God by which he is redeeming the world, the concept of the covenant has opened wide perspectives for a historical view of revelation and a theology of

history. In those circles the covenant has indeed become what A. Weiser has called a "*Formel für die Ideologie der Geschichte*"—a formula that leads to a believing view of history.⁴²

Israel has confessed Yahweh as the God who has chosen her. The very act of his revelation to her is elective in nature, and thus it shares in the mystery of all revelation. God's coming is always at the same time a sovereign and a gracious choosing. All divine revelation, in the Israelite view, has this aspect of election; Israel's faith is indeed a "*Wahlreligion*" (Eichrodt), because her Lord is an electing God, the God of the historical initiative. Israel's election cannot be *explained*; it can only be *confessed*. In Israel's confession it became a central article of faith.⁴³

The basic point for our discussion is this: according to the above view, Yahweh was primarily confessed as the One who reveals himself through his historical dealings with man. This idea of historical revelation, it is affirmed, determined Israel's confession of nature as creation. As it is stated by Theodorus Christiaan Vriezen, Yahweh is in the Old Testament confessed as the God of history rather than as the Creator-God.⁴⁴ Or perhaps we should say that the latter confession is derived from the former. It is the covenant community that confesses Yahweh as the Creator-God. The relative lateness of the Creation accounts is therefore sometimes regarded not merely as a matter of historical criticism but as significant also from a *theological* point of view. "For the Old Testament the creation is a secondary confession concerning the Name of God," according to H. K. Miskotte.⁴⁵ Karl Barth, who, as is well known, speaks of the covenant as "the inner ground of the Creation," has remarked that "the decisive commentary to the Biblical Creation accounts is the rest of the Old Testament."⁴⁶

Thus a powerful counteroffensive against historicism had been set in motion through newer research in the fields of exegesis and Biblical theology, which in turn influenced, as well as were reinforced by, studies in dogmatic theology. Many Old Testament studies became oriented toward a *Theologie der Tatsachen*, i.e., a theology in which the characteristic nature of divine revelation is found especially in events that faith confesses to be manifestations of the saving presence of God, events that reveal

his providential guidance in the destinies of men as well as in nations and cultures. The term "*Heilsgeschichte*" became once more quite respectable in theological circles, although few scholars proposed a theology of *Heilsgeschichte* in the exact sense of the nineteenth-century proponents of such a system.

The idea of *Heilsgeschichte*, as presented in these recent studies, incorporates the belief that God acts in history and reveals himself through the medium of history, yes, even beyond that, that God does not just find history as a given reality and as the territory for his revelation, but that revelation in the real sense of the word (Word!) *constitutes* history; God creates history! Thus it became widely recognized that there are more things between heaven and earth, viz., in history, than a positivist historicism had dreamed of.

The same theme can be found in some major New Testament studies of the past decades. E. Stauffer presented his New Testament theology as a "Christocentric theology of history."⁴⁷ But when *Heilsgeschichte* is mentioned, the name that comes particularly to mind is undoubtedly that of Oscar Cullmann. In his works, especially in his book *Christ and Time*, and more recently in his *Christology of the New Testament*, we come closer to a theology of *Heilsgeschichte* in the nineteenth-century sense of the word than anywhere else in contemporary theology.

Concerning the book *Christ and Time*, Cullmann left no doubt as to his basic intention when he stated very early in the work: "Regardless of the title of my book, my primary concern is not with the question of time but with the presentation of the Biblical redemptive history."⁴⁸ He wishes to show by way of *historical* study, i.e., investigation of the earliest Christian confessions, "that the redemptive history is the heart of the primitive New Testament Christian preaching."⁴⁹

In his book Cullmann traces what he calls "the continuous redemptive line,"⁵⁰ which is interpreted as the "Christ-line," since he is convinced that all history must be understood and judged from the midpoint: Jesus Christ. Consequently, Cullmann can state that all Christian theology is in its innermost essence Biblical history;⁵¹ it sets forth in a systematic fashion the Christian witness concerning God's historical dealings with man.

He is speaking not only about the believers but about all men, and in the final analysis about all things as well. In other words, world history comes into view too, since, according to this author, "all so-called 'secular' occurrence stands in relation to the redemptive history."⁵² But beyond that, the universalism we mentioned before as being found in all great theologies of *Heilsgeschichte* appears here too. Cullmann calls it a "Christian universalism," in that all reality, nature as well as history, is seen and interpreted in the light of God's saving dealings with the world, which in turn, as we noticed already, find their unifying center in Jesus Christ.⁵³

There are many scholars who wish to incorporate certain aspects of *Heilsgeschichte* into their theology and retain the emphasis on God's revelation through his actions in history, but who are critical of the kind of schematic theology of *Heilsgeschichte* proposed by a man like Cullmann. This question, however, is not our real concern in this study. The present-day critique against *Heilsgeschichte* goes far beyond a rejection of such systematic schemes. True, as we shall see in the next chapter, Bultmann is particularly severe in his attacks on Cullmann. However, his censures are directed as much at—let us say—the theology of Karl Barth, or, for that matter, all others who speak about the presence of God in history in other than existential terms. In other words, we must penetrate into the fundamental issues and problems inherent in all theologies that retain any elements of *Heilsgeschichte* in the traditional sense.

Two basic problems are contained in the very concepts that make up the word *Heilsgeschichte*. The questions are these: What does one mean by *Heil*—redemption—and what does one mean by *Geschichte*—history—when one uses these terms in this word combination? Is it meaningful to bring these two widely divergent realities together in one concept? Salvation is one thing; history is another thing. But what is salvation-history?

Karl G. Steck, who has written a monograph on the subject, is one of those who object to Cullmann's use of the concept, but he wishes to retain aspects of *Heilsgeschichte* in his theology. Nevertheless, he suggests that we abandon the term, because he feels that the term "history" is used in a sense which one can hardly

make intelligible to modern people.⁵⁴ Why is this so difficult? Because, the reply would be, it does not make sense to people today to assure them that something can be historical, but then to add immediately that it is not, at least in principle, accessible to historical research. After all, for the historian qua historian there is no evidence of a special kind of history and of unique historical occurrences within general history which have a redemptive quality.

What do we mean by redemption when we speak of redemptive history? This issue will be with us all through our study. It is fundamental. Salvation is in Christ. In wide Christian circles we agree on that. But then we go on to speak about the *redemptive presence* of God. There the problem starts! In what way, by what means, in what sense, does the redemption in Christ become part of our lives, and, specifically, in what respect can it be said to affect historical existence in the broadest sense of that term? Here we are confronted with a key question in contemporary theology.

If I understand him correctly, Richard Reinhold Niebuhr seems to attack the concept of *Heilsgeschichte*, because in his judgment it completely severs the ties between "regular history"—the history of "objective occurrences"—and "sacred history," which, he feels, is really regarded as a "nonhistorical history."⁵⁵ He believes that the fundamental problem facing modern theology does not lie in the naïveté of the primitive church, but rather in our modern consciousness, i.e., *our* attitude toward history,⁵⁶ which has led to the distinction between (or even the separation of) the internal history of faith and profane world history. He deals mainly with the epistemological problem, as is already indicated by the title of his book, and he believes that "the wide use of *Heilsgeschichte* suggests that Protestantism's distrust of *analogia entis* has spread from the doctrine of God to the knowledge of his historical revelation."⁵⁷

In what sense does the revelation participate in the stuff of nature and history, the realms of causal relationships and the space-time continuum? Niebuhr remarks in his book: "It is the ideas of nature which theology has uncritically borrowed from philosophy and the natural sciences that stand in the way of

the completion of a genuinely theological conception of history and historical reason."⁵⁸

In the case of Bultmann, as we shall see, Niebuhr's critique is quite correct, and Bultmann will gladly admit it. He wants this kind of separation, this kind of dualism. In the case of Karl Barth and many others who still use the concept of *Heilsgeschichte*, the situation is, as I hope to show, much more complicated. In the meantime, it is interesting to note that Bultmann and Niebuhr want to do away with the idea of *Heilsgeschichte* for diametrically opposite reasons, the former believing that it relates too closely revelation and the realities of the space-time continuum, and the latter maintaining that it separates them.

What concept of faith is implied in a theology of *Heilsgeschichte*? The fear is sometimes expressed that a *Theologie der Tatsachen*, which stresses the redemptive events and the pattern of the divine saving activity, will lead to an intellectualization of the faith. One becomes interested in clever theological schemes presented in ever-greater detail, and faith easily becomes identified with the objective truth of all these things. This does not always happen. We noticed before how, among the nineteenth-century theologians of *Heilsgeschichte*, there was a tendency to stress the dynamic nature of revelation, both in the coming of God in the existential encounter and in his historical dealings with the world. Nevertheless, the danger of a "spectator theology," which surveys the various supposed dispensations without coming to a personal decision and commitment, has not always been absent. Bengel's predisposition to calculate the year of the Parousia may serve as a warning!

Does faith need anything except the present experience? In what sense is some relationship to past events essential for the life of faith, and if past events are essential, which events are considered absolutely indispensable? These are some of the questions that arise.⁵⁹ Do we have to hold to any divine event, except the one that as past event becomes a divine presence to me? There are those who would gladly abandon so-called sacred history, as long as they can know the Savior.

With the above three questions we have prepared the stage for our next chapter. It ought to have become clear by now that

we are dealing with fundamental questions in contemporary theology. Gustav Weth concluded his book in 1931 with the remark that in the construction of a theology of *Heilsgeschichte* we must start from scratch.⁶⁰ The same questions are still crucial today, more than three decades later. In discussing the problem of the theological unity of the whole of Scripture, Wolfgang Schweitzer made the statement some years ago that "everything depends on what Christian theology makes of the idea of *Heilsgeschichte*,"⁶¹ and after he had surveyed some of the present struggles in theology, he remarked that the main issue at stake is "the meaning of the historical for the fundamentals of theology and within the theological system."⁶² With this question we are concerned in this study.

At the core of contemporary theological problems is the question of history. We all speak of historical revelation and of the Christian religion as a historical religion, but rarely before have so many people meant so many different things by these terms. Rudolf Bultmann, convinced that the traditional approach to this question has become obsolete for us today, has offered an alternative which, he believes, retains the essential elements of the Christian faith while removing (through interpretation) some of the modes of expression which in their present form have become meaningless to modern man. His interpretation of the New Testament message involves a radical reinterpretation of the idea of *Heilsgeschichte*. This shall be our concern in the next chapter.

II. FROM HISTORICISM TO HISTORICITY:

the existentialist approach

The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul . . . ; and history is an impertinence and an injury if it be any thing more than a cheerful apologue or parable of my being and becoming.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson,
in his essay on "Self-Reliance."

A. THE MODERN SITUATION

Rudolf Bultmann is deeply convinced that it is a mistake to seek an answer to the problem of historicism by returning to a theology of *Heilsgeschichte*. He would rather listen to Heidegger, and use some of the insights that are to be found in his existentialist analysis. We heard Bultmann remark that his interest in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger is to be explained by the fact that the latter deals in a new way with the question of history and the problems that have proved so perplexing for theology during the modern era, especially since the days of Troeltsch.

What does Bultmann regard as Heidegger's great contribution? The answer is briefly that Heidegger's existentialist analysis probes deeply into the historical nature of human existence. Historicism was greatly concerned about the course of history and the interrelationships between the endless flux of historical events, but it tended to neglect man as the historical agent whose

own historical existence is part of the stuff of history and who consequently always studies the historical process as one who is involved in it. Troeltsch, as we saw earlier, was aware of man's responsibility for the future and the need for human decision, but although he spoke with some appreciation of the work of Kierkegaard, the deep implications of what this thinker was saying for our understanding of the very nature of history were at that time not perceived.

Bultmann, like Troeltsch before him, is gravely concerned about "the modern situation" and its implications for the preaching and the theological labors of the Christian church. It can hardly be gainsaid that the immense increase in knowledge which has been the result of the historical and natural sciences has had a profound impact on the general outlook of modern people. Troeltsch used to put particular emphasis on *historical* research and the way in which it had produced an awareness among intelligent and informed people of the relativity of their own culture—its implied *Weltanschauung*, value judgments, and spiritual insights. This, as we have seen, led to the conviction that all historical developments are part of one great continuum in which everything is related to everything else in a cause-and-effect nexus. Thus the view of a "sacred history," set apart as a special kind of history from general history, became quite unacceptable to many modern people.

Bultmann deals essentially with the same problems, but he calls special attention to the effects upon modern thought of the new discoveries in the realm of the *natural* sciences. The forces and the laws of nature have been discovered, and the basic notions of the scientific world view have become such common knowledge by now that man's outlook upon the world will never again be the same as it was in the rather recent past. In the famous essay entitled "New Testament and Mythology," which Bultmann published in 1941 and which has been the cause of much of the postwar debate, he refers to modern people who make use of electric light, of the radio, and of medical and clinical research, and he sympathizes with their difficulties as they are confronted with the world view of the New Testament.¹ "Nobody reckons with direct intervention by transcendent

powers," Bultmann states flatly in another context.² Even in the short time span since the publication of the above-mentioned essay, we could add such magnificent achievements as space travel and intercontinental television.

Ours is indeed an age of tremendous advances in our knowledge about the world. It is also an age of secularism and of widespread estrangement from the message of the gospel, the church, and the life of faith. Many have discarded the Christian faith, because they have become persuaded that it is not relevant to their lives as modern people. Multitudes of others remain deaf to the evangelistic efforts of the church, because the proclamation addressed to them has, in their view, the ring of an "old-time religion" which at best may lay claim to an antiquarian interest.

Our time has been characterized as the "post-Christian era." On the one hand, one can witness in various parts of the world the resurgence of antichristian movements. Once again the church has become a persecuted fellowship. On the other hand, one finds the much more dangerous phenomenon of massive indifference toward the church and its message, because of the growing conviction on the part of hosts of people that somehow God has become "unnecessary." This mood by and large does not represent a militant atheism, but rather it is marked by a sense of the absence and silence of God, and the feeling that it probably makes little difference anyhow.

Bultmann believes firmly that modern man is desperately in need of the message of the Christian gospel, and that it has an ultimate relevance for his existence. Modern man, he holds, who knows so much about the world, lacks a true self-understanding. In some very important respects he has indeed gained the world—new worlds of knowledge and new worlds of products—but he has lost his soul. However, to use the title of one of C. G. Jung's books, "modern man in search of a soul" can be helped through a confrontation with the *kerygma*—the liberating and life-renewing Word of the gospel. Thus, once again he can find his true self and genuine existence, as, through his relationship to God and his acceptance of the gift of divine salvation through for-

givenness, he finds the perspective and the power to live his finite existence in faith, hope, and love.

If this is true, however—if the church has a liberating word for the world—how then can the fact that so many do not listen be explained? Bultmann would undoubtedly agree that there are numerous factors that should be taken into account if one were to attempt an answer to this question: sincere intellectual doubt, a materialistic mentality, fear of commitment, etc. Bultmann's primary concern, however, is to call the church to self-examination, because he believes that one of the reasons for many people's rejection of the message of the gospel is to be found in the manner in which it is presented. He holds that as long as we continue to proclaim the message in terms and categories that are meaningless to people today, they will turn away from it in disappointment and even in disgust.

The question immediately arises whether Bultmann realizes that the gospel is inherently a scandal, an offense to the natural man and to the wisdom of the world. Indeed, Bultmann would reply, it certainly is, but some of the offenses that have been put in the way of people's faith have nothing whatsoever to do with the real scandal of the gospel of the cross, and these stumbling blocks ought to be removed.

The intention, then, is to reinterpret the message of the gospel in thought forms and categories that are considered understandable to people in a scientific age. With this project Bultmann wants to make a mere beginning, for he considers it a task that will require a long time to accomplish—perhaps a generation or more. Bultmann preaches for commitment; he speaks in the hour of decision. What categories, according to him, must underlie preaching in order to make it genuine, modern, and compelling? That is the question we shall seek to answer in this chapter.

The reconstruction of traditional theology, as Bultmann envisages it—and he has begun to undertake it himself—has far-reaching implications. We shall not attempt to present an exhaustive analysis of all the various aspects of his theology. We shall discuss it in connection with the contemporary debate on the relationship between redemption and the historical re-

alities. However, although thus delimiting our treatment, let there be no doubt that we shall be dealing with a key issue in contemporary theology, as well as with a central aspect of Bultmann's theology.

At this point a few words must be inserted concerning the structure of this study. As was indicated in the preceding chapter, later we shall retrace our steps a bit and review the development which, mainly via Kierkegaard, led to the emergence of the early dialectical theology to which Bultmann made significant contributions. This procedure may at first seem somewhat inconsistent, but we follow it purposely because we believe that in the end it will enhance the clarity of the total picture. An analysis of the theology of Bultmann will bring a number of the fundamental issues into very sharp focus. A consistently antithetical position to a theology of *Heilsgeschichte* is formulated here. Another sharp contrast will then become apparent in our exposition on the Catholic approach. It will be good to study the alternatives in the light of the very systematic and uncompromising position of Bultmann. Other great exponents of the early dialectical theology, as for instance Barth and Brunner, have revised their theology somewhat as far as this question of redemption and historical existence is concerned. Consequently, they must be treated as the representatives of what could be called a middle way.

We remember the central question of this study: What do we mean by redemption and what do we mean by history when we combine these two realities in the concept of *Heilsgeschichte*? The question concerning the nature of the historical is paramount in the whole dispute on Bultmann's proposal to demythologize the New Testament. After the appearance of Cullmann's book *Christ and Time*, Bultmann wrote a critical article in which he addressed this question to the author: What do you mean by history?³ He will gladly agree with Cullmann that "the saving event" (*das Heilsgeschehen*) is the central theme of Christian theology, but he evidently fails to discover it in the events that Cullmann describes as *Heilsgeschichte*.⁴ Must we not first of all determine, asks Bultmann, in what legitimate theological sense one can speak of history?

The question can also be formulated thus: When Cullmann uses the word combination "*Heilsgeschichte*," does he then use the word "history" in a sense different from its use in the word combination "world history"?⁵ World history is usually not confessed. It is traced by means of the methods of historical research; it is systematized into as complete a chronicle of past events as can be composed. To speak theologically, however, means that one speaks in and from *faith*. Consequently, what is the historical reality which is known, experienced, and grasped in faith? Is it, as Cullmann would suggest, a "line" of historical occurrences which find their "midpoint" in Jesus Christ? This, Bultmann claims, is a view that is too much influenced by a modern and not really Biblical concept of history.⁶

It will become clearer as we pursue our analysis that Bultmann connects the question of history very intimately with one's concept of faith, because he holds that only the happening that can be experienced and grasped in faith should be designated as *Heilsgeschichte*. Chr. Hartlich and W. Sachs address virtually the same questions to Karl Barth concerning his view of history. The latter had intimated that in his opinion one could speak of history even though one is speaking of a reality that cannot be traced by means of historical research. Barth mentioned the resurrection as an example. There is a "happening," although not an event that could be established by means of the scientific-historical method. Barth must mean that such a reality is *conceivable* to him, counter Hartlich and Sachs, but "we remain unconvinced in this respect and concur with the repeatedly expressed request of Bultmann that Barth give at long last an account of his concept of reality, i.e., of history."⁷

Our thesis, then, is that at the heart of the dispute about "demythologizing" and the existentialist interpretation of the New Testament lies the question of history. As Friedrich Gogarten has well stated, "This controversy is concerned with a radically different interpretation of history. On both sides it is known, or thought to be known, that the reality which underlies the Christian faith is a historical one, but the two sides attach quite different meanings to this historical reality."⁸

Bultmann has at times manifested a spirit of annoyed impa-

tience in his responses to those who have attacked his views, especially so when he has felt that his underlying conception of history has not been acknowledged, or at least has not received due consideration. We must therefore carefully analyze this aspect of the question. What does Bultmann regard as the Biblical, and therefore theologically legitimate, concept of history? We shall seek an answer to this question by first raising two other closely related questions: How do we know history? What is the nature of the history which is thus known?

B. HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE AND ITS HERMENEUTIC METHOD

How do we know history? This question becomes inevitable, for, as Bultmann himself once stated, "in the discussion about the essence and meaning of history there was bound to come to light the problem of how it is possible to know history, whether indeed it is possible to attain objective knowledge of history at all."⁹ Some may be inclined to say that this is not such a difficult matter, since all one has to do is to look at the facts as they are accessible to us through the available historical sources, and that then on the basis of the facts one can reach an understanding of history. This view, as we have already noted before, raises a host of difficult problems concerning the reliability of the sources and the degree of certainty concerning the past that can be attained through a study of them. Furthermore, we always interpret the "facts" according to certain principles of interpretation. Only those who share our basic presuppositions will accept our fundamental conclusions. This is what Bultmann wants to bring out when he stresses that "every interpretation of history presupposes a hermeneutic method."¹⁰ This point has frequently not been sufficiently recognized. In this emphasis the influence of Dilthey on Bultmann's thought becomes quite apparent.

One might point out that we have come to know quite a bit about history by means of the objective scientific-historical method. This approach has yielded some imposing results. This is indeed true, and Bultmann does not wish to deny it. Some of his own greatest contributions have been made in the realm of the analysis of historical sources. When he raises the question

concerning the possibility of attaining objective knowledge of history, he does so as one who accepts the necessity of objective research and who recognizes a certain validity in its results. However, he wants to raise a deeper question, namely: How close does such knowledge really bring us to the historical reality? One can know much historical "truth" without having a true understanding of the inner historical reality.

Bultmann is not primarily interested in the outward, bare historical facts. He wants to penetrate into them, as it were, to grasp what he calls "the core of history," because he believes that it is from this reality that history "ultimately gains its essence and its meaning and becomes relevant."¹¹ One might know much about the historical records and at the same time know little about the historical realities, for behind the records are the dynamic realities of historical actions. And behind these actions are the dynamic realities of man's inner motivations and the interrelationships of human beings who are endowed with a certain freedom. When we see this, the question of history becomes tied to the question of meaning. The Greeks, Bultmann believes, lacked a real philosophy of history because they were too much oriented toward the past and failed to pursue the question of meaning sufficiently.¹² The stuff of history lies in the historical nature of human existence, and because our own lives share in this reality, we can attain genuine historical knowledge. This knowledge is beyond objectivity or subjectivity; it is existential.

Bultmann is intensely interested in "the hermeneutic problem." He has written an article on this theme, in which he expresses his views with great clarity.¹³ He insists that when we interpret a text—any text—we ought not to be concerned exclusively with the "external form," but we must penetrate into the "inner form." "The presupposition of every comprehensive interpretation," he wrote, "is a *previous living relationship to the subject*, which directly or indirectly finds expression in the text and which guides the direction of the enquiry."¹⁴ In other words, there must be some *life relationship* (*Lebensverhältnis*) between the author and the interpreter, or, rather, between the experiences that are embodied in the text and the experiences of the one who reads the text. In short, Plato can be understood only by

one who philosophizes with him, i.e., by one who becomes involved in the questions raised so that they become his own questions. Not the man of objective research but the man who becomes a searcher with Plato shall truly grasp what the text has to say.

According to Bultmann, there is always some reality which directly or indirectly comes to expression in the text. How, for instance, does a novel speak to us? Isn't it when somehow we recognize ourselves and the experiences of our own existence in the characters portrayed? Furthermore, claims Bultmann, man always approaches the text with certain questions, and the kind of questions we ask as we are engaged with the text will in large measure determine what the text will say to us.

Here we are confronted with the concept of "pre-understanding" (*Vorverständnis*), which plays such a prominent role in Bultmann's hermeneutics. "This is, then," says he, "the basic presupposition for every form of exegesis, that your own relation to the subject matter prompts the question you bring to the text and elicits the answers you obtain from the text."¹⁵ We never really act as completely neutral observers, although we sometimes like to believe that we do. Furthermore, the more we succeed in doing it, the less we will grasp of the historical reality. To those who go to the text without questions, the text will remain silent.

To state the matter concretely now: With which question do we turn to the Bible? With a question concerning a so-called *Heilsgeschichte*, an order of events which have once taken place? But, Bultmann would insist, this is not at all the real question the Bible seeks to answer. The fundamental question one ought to address to the Bible is the question concerning human existence, the question concerning the nature and destiny of man, the question concerning the meaning of life.¹⁶ After all, one can learn by heart a series of so-called "sacred events" without ever really hearing the message or meeting God.

But what is the pre-understanding that enables man to hear and grasp the message of Scripture? Does he already know, by himself, what is to be heard there? In that case he would not need the revelation. Bultmann characterizes the pre-understanding as "a non-knowing knowing," or a "knowing in the nature of a

quest."¹⁷ Elsewhere he has stated that "man has a knowledge of God in advance, though not of the revelation of God, that is, of his action in Christ."¹⁸ The restless heart, which has not yet found peace in God, searches for God. It could not even seek after God if it did not know of God.

This, then, is the hermeneutic principle that Bultmann adopts in historical studies, namely, the principle of life relationship and existential involvement. In the era of historicism this emphasis had generally been overlooked, and consequently the texts had been treated as so many "sources" by which we could reconstruct the picture of a past era. The same principle was applied to the Bible, in an attempt to reconstruct Israel's past or to produce an exact biography of the historical Jesus.

In Bultmann's works great emphasis is put on the difference between our study of history and our study of nature. Our relationship to these two realms is not the same, and consequently the approach followed in the one case cannot be applied to the other. So often, Bultmann complains, history has been understood by analogy to nature, and attempts have been made to apply methods that had proved successful in the natural sciences to the realm of history also. But objectivity in the historical sciences is not the same thing as objectivity in the natural sciences.¹⁹ To some extent one can approach nature as something "out there," which one can study from a distance as an objective observer, a detached analyst. Not so, however, with history!

"History," Bultmann insists, "gains meaning only when the historian himself stands within history and takes part in history."²⁰ In other words, involvement, and not cold detachment, is the prerequisite for true knowledge here. In historical knowledge an ultimate distinction between the knower and his object cannot be maintained. Quite to the contrary, historical science is held to be objective precisely in its subjectivity; it leads to the deeper knowledge not through objectification and detachment but through involvement and participation.

In the above exposition one can recognize the existentialist's protest against both a one-sided rationalism and a one-sided empiricism, and his vehement attack on the idea that all reality must be viewed in terms of the "subject-object" scheme. He re-

gards this approach, especially when imperialistically applied to all reality, as a threat to man's humanity. He sees the danger that modern man begins to look upon everything as an object at the disposal of the subject, so that he might know it, master it, and manipulate it. The importance of the manufacturing of products begins to overshadow the manhood of persons. Thus man forgets the deeper dimensions of existence, the realities of true selfhood in decision. When everything becomes a thing, man himself will in the end become an object, an "it," and he will perish in nothingness. Some of the great existentialists today seek to counteract the modern trend toward this kind of nihilism. Bultmann believes that a truly historical understanding of the gospel will greatly contribute to this cause. Hence his interest in the deeper knowledge, for the Bible, too, speaks of a knowledge of the heart when it is referring to faith. But what is the nature of the history known by the method outlined above? To this question we must now turn.

C. THE NATURE OF THE HISTORY WE KNOW

The idea of "the core of history" was mentioned, and some things were said about the concept of the primary historical reality which lies beyond history as historical report and chronicle of the past. In order to probe more deeply into Bultmann's theology of history, we must now further delineate these divergent concepts of history. Bultmann uses different terms to designate the two realities: *Historie* and *Geschichte*. The former term refers to history in the sense of "facts about the past," history as an object for study, the history that can be surveyed and cataloged with the attitude of the detached observer. The latter term, on the other hand, is used to designate history as it is lived and experienced, history that is known through participation and involvement and is understood in terms of human history. *Geschichtlichkeit* means the historicity (we use this term not because of its excellence but because of lack of a better one) of human existence, the life in freedom and decision.

Bultmann, as was noted before, has never made a secret of his dependence on Heidegger for some of the basic categories he

utilizes. He believes that Heidegger has furnished us with new and valuable insight concerning the nature of the historical. One of the distinctions very prominent in Heidegger's philosophy is that between *Dasein* and *Vorhanden sein*, the former denoting the world of human existence, and the latter the world of things that are extant. *Dasein* is the being of man; *Vorhandenheit* is the being of things. The world of things is that which is available to us and at our disposal. According to the existentialist philosophers, traditional metaphysics, in its search for the ultimate nature of reality, has too often and too exclusively concentrated on that which is *Vorhanden* while neglecting *being*, which is manifested through this very peculiar manner of being—human existence.

Existentialist philosophy, then, seeks to explore the deepest dimensions of reality by analyzing existence. As Bultmann sees it, this philosophy "tells us that human Being, as distinct from all other Being, means *existing*, a form of Being which assumes complete responsibility for itself."²¹ Without pausing at this time to inquire what Bultmann exactly means by the final words of this quotation, we can say at least this much: when one seeks to formulate a system of thought, one must be careful to avoid rationalistic abstractions by taking into account the *thinker* as a living, deciding, and responsible human being.

Because the existentialist philosophy is concerned with *Dasein*, it is also concerned with the idea of *Geschichte* as a new approach to the historical reality, an approach, namely, that will not be determined by the so-called subject-object dichotomy but that will take account of the relationship of involvement. Gogarten refers to this when he writes that "the existential philosophy is concerned with the attempts to achieve a new understanding of the essential nature of history . . ."; i.e., "an attempt is being made to extricate history from the subject-object pattern of thought."²² Michalson expresses it thus: "History refers to events in which subject and object exist in a mode of togetherness."²³ Bultmann is in wholehearted agreement with this attempt, and wants to show that of all concepts of history this one comes closest to the basic outlook of the New Testament.

Man and man alone, Bultmann holds, knows history in the

profoundest sense of the word. Human existence is the primary historical reality. Anyone, therefore, who seeks to know and understand and interpret history must take his starting point in the historical reality par excellence—the historicity of human existence. This concept of history is at the heart of Bultmann's theological system.²⁴

The primary historical reality is man. All else is the secondary historical.²⁵ Constitutive to this idea of history is an anthropology that sees man essentially as being in decision, and a concept of time that stresses the moment of decision more than the "stream" of time and the successiveness of periods. *Kairos* rather than *chronos* is considered to be theologically relevant. A few words must be added on both the view of man and the concept of time in Bultmann's theology of history.

Man is basically seen as possibility or potentiality. A human being is not a static something, or a finished product. A human being happens; human existence takes place in the act of freedom and decision.²⁶ This, according to Bultmann, is the way in which the Bible sees man, namely, as an existing being whose present is qualified by his past and who is beckoned by the future.²⁷ Thus every moment becomes potentially a moment of decision; in the present moment man is called to *be*, to act. For multitudes of people, however, it has virtually become impossible to act in responsible decision for the future, because they have forgotten what it really means to exist. As Bultmann himself has expressed it, "the man who lives without self-knowledge and without consciousness of his responsibility is a historical being in a much lower degree, one who is at the mercy of historical conditions, handing himself over to relativity. Genuine historicity means to live in responsibility, and history is a call to historicity."²⁸

Bultmann is also heavily indebted to Heidegger's distinction between authentic and inauthentic existence. As long as man fundamentally sees himself as one of the things in the world, or seeks his security in the world of things instead of in responsible decision, as long as man refuses to be himself and lives in the sphere of "*das Man*," the world of "they"—"the public"—he lives inauthentically.²⁹ In the *now*—the moment of decision, the existential encounter in which man ceases to be a spectator, ac-

cepts his past, and assumes responsibility for the future—in that moment historical existence is realized.

This leads us to the question of time. It has become clear by now that the moment of challenge and response forms the core of history. Consequently, Bultmann is little interested in time as "time span," in "successiveness" or the "course" of history. In order to become real history, history in the primary sense, historical development must somehow become part of my present—the *now*.³⁰

There are, of course, such realities as the course of time and historical development. The question for Bultmann is, How do they become existentially and therefore theologically relevant? As was noted repeatedly, Bultmann fears the spectator attitude with its false objectification, a posture that becomes concerned with the past as an interesting pastime while personal involvement is lacking. Both the past and the future can become meaningful, he believes, only as they somehow become part of the existential present. Now the following important question arises: What happens when this hermeneutic method, with its concomitant concept of time, is applied to the Bible? This question will concern us in the following section.

D. BIBLICAL HISTORY: THE NEED FOR AN EXISTENTIALIST INTERPRETATION

The Bible seems quite interested in events that have occurred in the past—those that have taken place in the history of Israel, and supremely the events that surrounded the coming, the ministry, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also seems to be very much concerned with future events and the coming of the new heaven and the new earth. In both the Old and the New Testaments one finds a constant witness to the mighty and saving deeds of God. What does Bultmann intend to do with these aspects of the Biblical witness? This question leads us to Bultmann's proposal to demythologize the New Testament, or—to say the same thing in a positive way—to interpret the New Testament existentially.

We shall begin our exposition with an emphasis on the eschato-

logical expectation in the New Testament, because Bultmann himself usually starts there when he wants to make his position clear. Since the days of Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer there has been a rediscovery of the eschatological orientation in Jesus' preaching. Attention has been called to the affinities between Jesus' thought and certain emphases in the apocalyptic literature of late Judaism. Bultmann agrees with those who hold that Jesus, and later the primitive Christian community, expected the imminent breakthrough of the new order of the Kingdom of God. When this did not take place, it is asserted, a crisis ensued in the thinking of the early Christians which eventually became reflected in the development of theological systems.³¹

What can be done with the eschatological-apocalyptic categories we find in the New Testament message? ³² Bultmann's argument runs somewhat like this: Modern man has a completely different picture of the world, one that has been formed by a scientific outlook on things, with its implied notion of causal relationships. The same thing can be said of man's view of history. Today people think of history in terms of human freedom and responsibility. In short, nature and history are no longer seen as the domain of external powers, such as demons, for instance, which exercise a controlling influence upon them. We know now that these New Testament ideas are mythological. We know also where they came from, namely, from Jewish apocalyptic sources and the redemption myths of Gnosticism.³³ Should we, on the basis of this knowledge, ignore these categories or eliminate them? Bultmann does not want to do either.

The nineteenth-century theologians were inclined to interpret the New Testament message of the Kingdom mainly in moralistic terms and this-worldly social ideals. More recent research has made this approach impossible. Schweitzer and others are inclined to discard the apocalyptic elements in the New Testament as outmoded and irrelevant embellishments that have no real meaning for us. Bultmann wants to retain them and interpret them, for he believes that they contain valuable insights for people today.

To require of people that they hold to the mythological

language as it stands, Bultmann believes, would mean that one forces multitudes of people into the position of a *sacrificium intellectus* and a loss of intellectual integrity. The church might regard this as a "good work," but it has nothing to do with faith in the Biblical sense. On the other hand, the difference between him and the old-style liberals, according to Bultmann, consists in this: that they wanted to *eliminate* the mythological language in the Bible, whereas he seeks to *interpret* it existentially, and thus to remain faithful to the original intent of the Bible.

In his famous essay on "New Testament and Mythology," Bultmann gave some examples of mythological language in the way the Bible refers to nature as well as to history. The cosmology of the New Testament is said to be essentially mythological: the world is viewed as a three-storied structure; the earth is seen as more than the scene of natural, everyday events—it is viewed as the scene of the supernatural activity of God and his angels on the one hand, and of Satan and the demons on the other.³⁴ History, too, is seen as a sphere under control of supernatural powers. In their everyday life, however, when people work in the laboratory or read in their newspaper about world events, they do not live by this kind of conception of the universe and history. Must they now be required to adopt it on Sunday, because allegedly it is part of the essence of the Christian faith?

Certainly, Bultmann would agree, the New Testament witnesses to salvation. It offers to man the reality of this salvation in his own existence. People are told about the possibility of a great happening in their lives, an event that can rightly be described as a new birth. This, Bultmann holds, is the salvation-event which is the special content of the New Testament preaching. This is the eschatological event with which the New Testament preaching is concerned. However, it witnesses to this reality in language that corresponds with the mythological picture of the universe indicated above.

At this point we must let Bultmann speak for himself in the following rather lengthy quotation: "It [the New Testament] proclaims in the language of mythology that the last time has now come. 'In the fullness of time' God sent forth his Son, a preexistent divine Being, who appears on earth as a man. He dies

the death of a sinner on the cross and makes atonement for the sins of men. His resurrection marks the beginning of the cosmic catastrophe. Death, the consequence of Adam's sin, is abolished, and the demonic forces are deprived of their power. The risen Christ is exalted to the right hand of God in heaven and made 'Lord' and 'King.' He will come again on the clouds of heaven to complete the work of redemption, and the resurrection and judgment of men will follow. Sin, suffering, and death will then be finally abolished."³⁵

Here, in outline, is the New Testament *Heilsgeschichte*. What shall we do with it? Ought we to accept it as a recital of redemptive events, or view it as a "Christ-line"? Such an interpretation, Bultmann asserts, is not in accordance with the basic intention of the New Testament, and it does not lead one to the true salvation-event. There is a real message here, a life-giving and life-changing word for human existence. The nature of the eschatological event will become clear as the mythological language is interpreted existentially.

But why this *existential* interpretation? Why this implication that the text will yield its inner truth only if the whole historical perspective of the Bible is interpreted in terms of personal existence? Bultmann replies that the text itself demands this approach, because it alone corresponds with the true intent of the mythological language. The myth speaks about the other-worldly in terms of this-worldly categories; it speaks of the transcendent in terms of space and time categories; it sees the divine as present in the realms of nature and history. Thus, myths give the transcendent reality an immanent, this-worldly objectivity.³⁶ However, the real purpose of the myth is not at all to teach man about the world or about future apocalyptic events, but to speak of human existence. The myth is used to express a certain understanding of the self-in-the-world.³⁷ And the understanding of the self and of existence, which is expressed in the mythological language of the New Testament, is extremely relevant for man today. Therefore, says Bultmann, as a message about existence it can best be communicated in existential terms.

Now let us take more specifically the eschatological message of the New Testament. To take these passages as accounts con-

cerning what is going to happen in the future would, in Bultmann's judgment, betray a complete misunderstanding of what they really are trying to say. The "last things," he believes, must not be interpreted in terms of chronology. There is a more than temporal meaning here; there is a kerygmatic meaning, a message concerning the significance of the transcendent for human existence.³⁸ In other words, the important thing is not that man knows what is going to happen at the end of time, but that in this moment he knows what it means to exist before God.

Those who go to the Bible with what Bultmann regards as speculative questions concerning the end-time will find materials there to satisfy them. But he believes that they will miss the message and its meaning. We are reminded of the idea of the "core of history," the real history which is the life of man, who, standing between the past and the future, is called to responsible decision. How can I live with my past? How can I face the future? Burdened with guilt and encumbered with anxiety, man frequently spends the present moment in spiritual paralysis. To this problem, Bultmann believes, the Bible wants to give an answer; it is the problem of man's historical existence, the real history, in which the Bible is interested.

The kerygma, which is essentially seen as the message of divine deliverance through Jesus Christ, gives man the assurance of divine forgiveness, thus liberating him from the past and his guilt, and opening up the future for him in hope; it gives him a new understanding of himself, and authentic existence, by which he is enabled to forsake the insecure securities he has sought in the world, and in faith to accept the grace of God, which in turn empowers him to live a life of responsible decision. When this happens, the eschatological event has occurred!³⁹ The moment of encounter and response to the grace of God is the eschatological *now*; it is the acceptable time, the day of salvation, the *Heilsgeschehen*.

Can such a procedure find any justification in the New Testament itself? Bultmann replies in the affirmative. He holds, namely, that already the apostle Paul, and especially John, the author of the Fourth Gospel, have made a beginning with this kind of reinterpretation of the mythological language. Paul

adopted the apocalyptic view which, via late Judaism, had entered Christianity, but at the same time he adapted it to the existentialist *kerygma* he proclaimed. He did this, Bultmann asserts, by altering it in a decisive manner, i.e., by interpreting it on the basis of his anthropology.⁴⁰

Paul, for instance, takes the view of the two aeons, which in the Old Testament is expressed in the book of Daniel and which was more fully developed during the intertestamental period, and he interprets it in terms of the personal history of every individual. In Rom., ch. 7, Bultmann says, the apostle presents the history from Adam, by way of the law, to Christ, in the form of an anthropological "I."⁴¹ Thus the history of the nation and the history of the world assume, at the most, a secondary significance. In Bultmann's words, the apostle "brings to light another phenomenon, the historicity of man, the true historical life of the human being, the history that everyone experiences for himself and by which he gains his real essence."⁴² Thus, Bultmann holds, the problem of the so-called "delayed Parousia" is solved; it did not take place, and yet it occurs time and time again in human experience through the preaching of the *kerygma*.

Then Bultmann continues his discourse on this matter by stating that "the conception of the eschatological event as happening in the present is still more radically unfolded in John, because he gives up the expectation of future cosmic events, an expectation that Paul still retains."⁴³ In short, for John, eternal life is here; he who believes *has* eternal life.

Christian existence is lived in the interim, the "time between." For Paul and John both, according to Bultmann, this "between" has not only chronological, but also essential, meaning. It is the dialectic "between" which characterizes the Christian existence as between "no longer" and "not yet." Similar language can be found in the works of Oscar Cullmann. To him also, the interim is the time of the "already" and the "not yet," it is "the time between the decisive battle, which has already occurred, and the 'Victory Day.'"⁴⁴ Says Cullmann, "This is the only dialectic and the only dualism that is found in the New Testament. It is . . . *the dialectic of present and future.*"⁴⁵ We find some similarity in terms, and yet the two theological positions are very far apart,

mainly because they embody such divergent views on the theological significance of chronological time.

We have now stated Bultmann's basic position. We have noticed how he rejects the concept of *Heilsgeschichte* in the traditional sense. We have followed him in his argument that we must first give consideration to the hermeneutic question, How does one know history? Then we moved on to an analysis of the nature of the history thus known, and we were introduced to the concept of history in the primary sense—"the core of history," viz., *Dasein*, human existence, as historical being par excellence. Finally we have raised the question of Biblical history, and we have presented Bultmann's demand that this history be interpreted in terms of the concept of history in the primary sense, i.e., be interpreted existentially, which in turn requires a demythologization of certain New Testament categories.

The above proposals for a theological reconstruction have engendered a great debate in which, since World War II, theologians of various Christian traditions have participated. The essay of 1941, entitled "New Testament and Mythology," to which we have already made frequent reference, was undoubtedly the explosive force that set off the chain reaction, although it must be kept in mind that the essay contained, in essence, views that Bultmann had advanced over a period of decades.⁴⁶ He simply drew out the inherent implications of his theological position in more blunt and concise language, and showed their consequences for the practical ministry.

John B. Cobb, Jr., has made the observation that "the fundamental understanding of the relation of God and the world is decisive for Bultmann's whole position."⁴⁷ We share this view, and we have already called attention to Bultmann's idea that this is a universe that does not allow for outside intervention of any sort. Hence the concept of a "closed" universe, a world of causal relationships. The particular concept of history and the particular idea of redemption that Bultmann has developed in his theology are his answer to the problems posed by the question of the relation of God and the world, of revelation and existence, or, as we have usually expressed it in this study, of redemption and the historical realities. A number of questions have been

raised in the dispute on demythologizing. We must pay further attention to some of the arguments between the proponents and the opponents of an existentialist theology of history in order to get a clearer idea of the basic question involved. We shall then discover that the underlying issue is that of the presence of God. After we have further analyzed these questions, we must conclude this chapter with a few remarks on the Christological and pneumatological implications of Bultmann's position.

E. "KERYGMA" AND "HEILSGESCHICHTE"

1. GOD AS ACTING

"God who acts!" This has indeed become a favored expression among contemporary theologians, for in wide circles today the view has been predominant that revelation in the Biblical sense implies primarily the manifestation of God's power and providence through certain events that are prophetically interpreted as being of a revelatory nature. This, as we have noticed earlier, is the central content of the concept of *Heilsgeschichte*, and in this sense the idea of *Heilsgeschichte* has been accepted by many who would otherwise not wish to be identified with a theology of *Heilsgeschichte* that operates with rigid schemes.

Can one, in the context of an existentialist theology as described above, still speak of the living God who reveals himself through his actions? In his booklet *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, Bultmann has devoted a whole chapter to the theme "the meaning of God as acting."⁴⁸ Already in one of his first reactions to comments and criticisms which had been made with reference to his essay of 1941, Bultmann stated, "It should be clear that I am not talking about an idea of God, but am trying to speak of the living God in whose hands our time rests, and who encounters us at specific moments in our time."⁴⁹ Thus God acts: in the encounter. This encounter takes place through the Word, i.e., through the preaching of the gospel. Immediately following the above-cited words we read, "God encounters us in his Word, i.e., in a particular word, in the proclamation inaugurated with Jesus Christ."⁵⁰ Then Bultmann continues thus: "True, God encounters us at all times and in all places, but he cannot be seen

everywhere unless his Word comes as well and makes the moment of revelation intelligible to us in its own light."⁵¹

In other words, we speak of the act of God only *in concreto*, as the act which we have experienced in our own lives when the word of forgiveness has been proclaimed to us and we have accepted it in faith. One does not in principle deny that the activity of God encompasses more than the encounter that one experiences, but these are realities that cannot be grasped in faith, and consequently one cannot speak about them. We remember that theology is considered basically the language of faith; what cannot be expressed on the basis of personal faith becomes theologically quite irrelevant.

The same fundamental perspective is expressed in the following way: "If the action of God is not to be conceived as a worldly phenomenon capable of being apprehended apart from its existential reference, it can only be spoken of by speaking simultaneously of myself as the person who is existentially concerned. To speak of the act of God means to speak at the same time of my existence."⁵² The emphasis falls exclusively on the here and now; revelation is essentially *Anrede*—address. Once more we must let Bultmann speak for himself: "Since human life is lived out in time and space, man's encounter with God can only be a specific event here and now. This event, our being addressed by God here and now, our being questioned, judged, blessed by him, is what we mean when we speak of an act of God."⁵³

Bultmann denies that his views represent a pure subjectivism. The very concept of existence implies relationship. It is part of its essence, and as far as Bultmann is concerned, this is especially true of the relationship to God.⁵⁴ In the encounter, through the Word, God himself comes to us. But, Bultmann would insist, I can speak of this only on the basis of personal faith. However, that God cannot be seen, except through faith, does not imply that he does not exist outside of faith.⁵⁵ The *believer* confesses God as the living God. He confesses him as the One who has mercifully acted in his life. Hence Bultmann's repeated emphasis that "every assertion about God is simultaneously an assertion about man and vice versa."⁵⁶ Earlier in our study we heard Bavinck state that Cocceius substituted the anthropological for

the theological perspective. One must be careful to note in what sense this is meant. The same is true in Bultmann. "I am trying to substitute anthropology for theology," he says, "for I am interpreting theological affirmations as assertions about human life."⁵⁷ In this, too, he believes he is faithfully following in the footsteps of the apostle Paul.

To speak of God as acting is, as far as Bultmann is concerned, paramount to saying that one has been addressed by the gospel, and that one has accepted the message in faith as the truth about one's own life.⁵⁸ This, Bultmann believes, is the "salvation-event" to which the New Testament witnesses. The so-called "salvation-events" (*Heilstatsachen*) which have to do with the past and the future, replies Bultmann to his critics, are themselves matters of faith, and visible only in faith.⁵⁹ Indeed, few would deny this. The question is whether such events, which come to us as a witness of faith, can in turn become an essential ingredient of our personal faith.

Bultmann is ever afraid of objectifying modes of thinking, of speaking in an abstract and detached manner about the revelation of God without reference to personal faith and commitment. The idea of a recitation of the great deeds of God has for him this connotation. He does not deny "God's action generally," i.e., in nature and history, but he would insist that this action is hidden as much from the believer as from the nonbeliever, and that the former should therefore not speculate about it.⁶⁰ Otherwise, God's activity in the world might easily become regarded as one of the many world phenomena, on one level with "general history," and consequently as being accessible to all, irrespective of faith or unbelief.⁶¹ Consequently, without specifically denying "God's action generally," we must nevertheless conclude that "statements which speak of God's action as cosmic events are illegitimate."⁶²

2. GOD'S ACT IN CHRIST

The preceding discussion raises another, very important question. It can be stated thus: If an occurrence in the past can have no meaning to me as an event of the past, what, then, about the Biblical witness concerning God's act in Jesus Christ? Or to

express the question differently: What is the relationship between my existential encounter *hic et nunc* and the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ *illic et tunc*?

Bultmann definitely desires to be a *Christian* theologian, and as such he seeks to maintain the centrality of Jesus Christ in the reality of redemption. How does he do this? The similarity between Bultmann's existentialist interpretation of the New Testament and Heidegger's existentialist analysis of *Dasein*⁶³ has caused some people to ask whether Bultmann's theology has anything distinctive to offer which cannot be found in Heidegger's philosophy. If one can come to a true understanding of existence without taking into account God's act in Christ, what, then, is the significance of Jesus Christ?

In his essay of 1941 Bultmann met the question head on. There he stated: "In fact it comes to this: can we have a Christian understanding of Being without Christ?" In the same context he raised the corollary question, "Is theology simply the precursor of existentialism?"⁶⁴ Let us listen to Bultmann's answer to his own question: "Here, then, is the crucial distinction between the New Testament and existentialism, between the Christian faith and the natural understanding of Being. The New Testament speaks, and faith knows of an act of God through which man becomes capable of self-commitment, capable of faith and love, of his authentic life."⁶⁵

The implication of the preceding quotation is that there may indeed be a formal similarity between the New Testament understanding of existence and the analysis of being propounded by existentialist philosophy. In other words, one can understand the true nature of human existence apart from Jesus Christ. But how can one move from the old life to the new? How does the transition take place from inauthentic to authentic existence? There lies the crucial difference! The Christian, who knows of God's act in Christ, has experienced divine grace and thus knows of the power of God to change lives and to transplant people from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light.

The "decisive act of God in Christ" must be retained. On this point Bultmann would defend his orthodoxy over against some liberals, both in the past and the present, who are too easily

inclined to abandon this Christian affirmation concerning God's unique act of salvation in Jesus Christ.

This whole issue has come into sharp focus in Bultmann's dispute with Fritz Buri.⁶⁶ The latter published an article in which he voiced his objections to Bultmann's retention of "the redemptive act of God in Christ."⁶⁷ He regards this idea as a residue of mythological thinking and an inconsistency in Bultmann's theological system. Why, he asks, did Bultmann not apply his method of demythologizing to the cross and the resurrection of Christ?⁶⁸ He believes that the much needed conversation between theology and philosophy will be out of the question as long as the idea of a once-for-all, unique and redemptive act of God in Christ is introduced into the discussion, although this kind of emphasis may save Bultmann from being declared an all-out heretic by the *heilsgeschichtliche* theologians.

We noticed Bultmann's view that the philosophical analysis of existence does not know of grace. Buri, who is attracted to the philosophy of Karl Jaspers and the concept of "philosophical faith" expounded therein, would deny this.⁶⁹ Jaspers, too, he maintains, knows of grace, although he does not tie it to the impossible notion of an exclusive and unique *Heilstat*.

What kind of grace does Jaspers accept? Briefly, it could be described as the gift-nature of freedom and the new possibility of life, the experience of "man-being-given-to-himself."⁷⁰ Jaspers, who like Heidegger seeks to present a philosophical analysis of existence, describes existence as particularly taking place in the so-called "*Grenzsituationen*," the boundary situations when man reaches the limits of his own abilities and has come into contact with the Transcendent. Then, through this contact, he can receive the experience of a new possibility. True existence takes place in the relation to the Transcendent, and transcendence is in turn revealed through existence, through being-in-freedom. This kind of analysis, Buri believes, can lead to a concept of grace, a reality that can be experienced without any reference to Jesus Christ. He therefore has concluded that we need not only demythologize theology, but we must also dekerigmatize it.⁷¹

Bultmann refuses to follow this path. Can he do so without accepting a basic inconsistency in his theological system? First he

insists that one can speak of a salvation-event only in terms of the existential encounter here and now. Then, in his emphatic statements that we must hold on to the redemptive act of God in Jesus Christ, he appears once again to connect faith with a past event. Bultmann does not regard this as a contradiction, but as a paradoxical relationship.

On the one hand, according to Bultmann, it must be maintained that revelation is not "something which took place in the past and [is] now an object of detached observation."⁷² On the other hand it must be said with equal emphasis that "to ignore the connection between faith on the one hand and the cross of Christ as a past event on the other would certainly mean surrendering the *kerygma*."⁷³ "Now, it seems to me that the only way to explain this event," Bultmann continues, "is by means of a paradox. This unique event of past history is an ever-present reality," i.e., for faith.⁷⁴

In other words, Jesus Christ is a salvation-event that happened "once"; it is, at the same time, an eternal event that occurs again and again in the soul of any Christian who believes. Why the singular word "event" while Bultmann stresses so much both the cross and the resurrection? Because, according to Bultmann, these two cannot be separated into two distinct events. He affirms that "the death and the resurrection of Christ are bound together in the unity of one salvation-occurrence."⁷⁵ This inseparable unity of the cross and the resurrection is affirmed repeatedly, for "faith in the resurrection is really the same thing as faith in the saving efficacy of the cross, faith in the cross as the cross of Christ."⁷⁶

What, then, is the content of this faith in the cross as the cross of Christ? Well, says Bultmann, "to believe in the cross of Christ does not mean to concern ourselves with a mythical process wrought outside us and our world, or with an objective event turned by God to our advantage, but rather to make the cross of Christ our own, to undergo crucifixion with him."⁷⁷ In this way Bultmann seeks to express the paradox.

Some relationship to history in the general sense must be maintained. "What matters," Bultmann stated in his exchange with Jaspers, "is that the incarnation should not be conceived

of as a miracle that happened about 1,950 years ago, but as an eschatological happening which, beginning with Jesus, is always present in the words of men proclaiming it to be a human experience."⁷⁸ In short, "the Christian message is bound to a historical tradition, and looks back to a historical figure and its history only to the extent that it regards this figure and its history as evidence of the Word of God."⁷⁹ To try to reconstruct this past history by means of historical research would, in Bultmann's judgment, be a hopeless task and without any real value to faith.

How, then, do we know Christ? The answer is: we meet him in the preaching, or as it is expressed in the above quote, "the incarnation . . . is always present in the words of men proclaiming it to be a human experience." We meet him because there he meets us. And nowhere else can we meet him, except in these words of men. "Christ meets us in the preaching as one crucified and risen. He meets us in the Word of preaching and nowhere else."⁸⁰

3. REVELATION AS "ANREDE": THE "KERYGMA"

The preceding expositions lead us to a further consideration of the very important concept of *kerygma*. We have used it repeatedly, and have often circumscribed it with the phrase "word of forgiveness," for this we regard to be the core of the concept in the theology of Rudolf Bultmann. Actually, the word "*kerygma*" implies more than a message; it is redemption at work in our midst. When we say this, we are immediately reminded of the central question in this study: How do we conceive of redemption, and in what sense can it be said to affect historical existence? As has become quite clear, Bultmann interprets the idea of history in terms of the eschatological *now*. He therefore prefers the word *Heilsgeschehen* (salvation-occurrence) over the word *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation-history). The corresponding concept of redemption is *kerygma*.

The *kerygma* is the medium of the divine presence in the world. It is therefore more than the message of the gospel in a formal sense; it is the Word as it becomes effectual through the preaching of the church. It is really the Word in action, and

as such it is God in action, i.e., through the preaching of men, God himself is present.⁸¹ Revelation, as the presence of the living God, is therefore essentially address (*Anrede*). When, in confrontation with the Word, man responds and receives a new self-understanding (a new *being*), then the salvation-occurrence takes place.

If this interpretation is correct, then it can be said that for Bultmann the *kerygma* encompasses the whole reality of redemption as it is present in the world. I agree with De Jong, who in his thorough study on Bultmann's theology has stated that "the untranslated Greek word "*kerygma*" is one—if not *the*—key word in Bultmann's faith and thought."⁸² Earlier we have called attention to the central importance of Bultmann's concept of time and history. We have devoted an extensive analysis to it. But I believe that Heidegger's existentialist concept of history actually became so important to Bultmann because it provided him with a view of history that corresponded with his own basic experience and view of redemption. With this new understanding of history, a relationship between revelation and history could be maintained.

The dynamic nature of *kerygma* must be clearly understood. Bultmann represents a radical type of theology of the Word. Says he, "If it is true that the proclamation of the salvation-occurrence (i.e., the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in their unity as cosmic occurrence) is not a preparatory instruction which precedes the actual demand for faith, but is, in itself, the call for faith, or the challenge to give up one's previous self-understanding, or the cry: 'Be reconciled to God'!—if that is so, then that means that *the salvation-occurrence is nowhere present except in the proclaiming, accosting, demanding, and promising word of preaching.*"⁸³ Thus, Bultmann believes, God is present and redemption is present without being *Vorhanden*, something at our disposal as if it were a reality among the worldly realities.

The word of preaching is the word of men, but it is "legitimized" through the person of Jesus Christ.⁸⁴ Elsewhere we read that "God meets us in his Word, in a concrete word, the preaching instituted in Jesus Christ."⁸⁵ A third expression is used when Bultmann states, "God encounters us in his Word—i.e., in a

particular word, in the proclamation inaugurated with Jesus Christ."⁸⁶ Legitimized, instituted, inaugurated—all these terms are used to maintain some relationship of the word of preaching with the Jesus of history without attributing any constitutive significance to salvation-occurrences in the past.

Few would deny that the forgiveness of sins and the resultant newness of life is a central aspect of the Biblical concept of redemption, although we will later hear strong Catholic protests when it is made *the* central aspect. The question often raised in both Protestant and Catholic circles is whether the concept of *kerygma*, as developed by Bultmann, is at all adequate to express the fullness of the reality of redemption as it is witnessed to in the Scriptures. Can the whole gospel of the *Kingdom* be compressed, as it were, into this category without a dangerous reduction of the Biblical dimensions? Is the encounter that takes place in the kerygmatic situation the Kingdom itself or just a moment (be it a very important one!) in the Kingdom? De Jong, in his aforementioned book, complains that "the other key words for faith—revelation, redemption, Christ, the Kingdom of God—are grouped around the *kerygma* of forgiveness, are understood and illuminated from that perspective, and in general are drawn back behind it."⁸⁷ *Heilsgeschichte*, in the words of Heinrich Ott, becomes "reduced to the kerygmatic situation."⁸⁸

The apostle Paul says that "faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). The issue at stake is whether there is more to redemption than the existential relationship of personal faith, and whether redemption is present in the world in any other way except the kerygmatic situation. Bultmann and his disciples would immediately raise the question of whether there is any other way of speaking about the presence of redemption without falling into unbiblical metaphysical terminology. Especially Friedrich Gogarten makes much of the distinction between the historical and the metaphysical approach. The former he regards as commensurate with the thought world of the Bible, while the latter is believed to lead inevitably to the objectification of God and his acts, as well as a "reification" (*Verdinglichung*) of the reality of redemption. "A decision must be made here," Gogarten claims,

"between historical and metaphysical thought."⁸⁹ Carl Michalson refers to the same decision when he writes, "Unlike Paul Tillich's correlation, historiography and not ontology is made the foundation for the relation between divine and human concerns."⁹⁰

Historical or metaphysical categories? The existentialists choose the former and adopt a radical type of theology of the Word. As we shall see in the next chapter, many in the Catholic tradition accept metaphysical modes of expression. Some of the difficulties raised by such theologies of grace will become apparent as we study them. In the face of these problems an existentialist theology of the Word and faith may seem particularly appealing. Revelation is conceived of as exclusively verbal (*Worhaft*) in nature. H. P. Owen has objected that Bultmann lacks the idea of divine immanence.⁹¹ This is precisely the kind of idea Bultmann wants to get away from; it is anathema to him, because he is convinced that it will always lead to a magical and unbiblical metaphysical concept of redemption and its presence in nature and history.

4. FAITH

Bultmann wants to adhere closely to the Reformation doctrine of *sola fide*. Why should man want anything besides faith in the immediate experience? And why seek any content of faith beyond what is given in the encounter? Bultmann frequently suggests that his opponents are operating with an unbiblical concept of faith, one that is less radical than his, because it basically does not take the idea of *sola fide* as seriously as he does. Hartlich and Sachs stress the point that Bultmann has demonstrated (at least to their satisfaction) *exegetically* that faith, in the New Testament sense of the word, is not the acceptance as truth of external redemption events of a supernatural nature, is not an acceptance of certain *facta credenda*, and is not a sacrifice of the intellect.⁹² What, then, is faith? Bultmann's own definition is that "faith is the abandonment of man's own security and the readiness to find security only in the unseen beyond, in God."⁹³

The implication of the above is that those who emphasize the importance of *Heilsgeschichte*, and not only of the existential *Heilsgeschehen*, are seeking to buttress their faith with an appeal

to certain outward events, which are not immediately given in faith, and that these people are therefore in danger of seeking a measure of security in essentially worldly realities. Man wants a *Weltanschauung*, because it makes things comprehensible to him in terms of a general understanding of man and the world. Belief, Bultmann insists, is not such a *Weltanschauung*, with its implied view of the world and its philosophy of history.⁹⁴ Belief means venture and decision; it means to stand before God and have one's whole present life called into question. Our world and life views, Bultmann feels, tend to serve as escapes from the crisis of this confrontation.

Bultmann does not see the necessity of people believing in a series of redemptive events. The only thing necessary is that man be confronted with the call and the claims of God. Some, he would maintain, who seek a support for this faith in a number of things that they hold to be true, are basically living by the doctrine of good works; they want to be justified by this meritorious "faith." Bultmann's remark that his program to demythologize the New Testament is really "the radical application of the doctrine of justification by faith to the sphere of knowledge and thought"⁹⁵ must be understood in this light.

Many believers would wholeheartedly agree with Bultmann that faith is not a meritorious acceptance as truth of certain *facta credenda* and is not a *sacrificium intellectus*, but would refuse nevertheless to accept the view that the course of world history and the realm of nature, as the whole earthly reality which is subject to scientific exploration, have no significance whatsoever for faith and are therefore theologically irrelevant. In a sermon preached in the spring of 1937 on the text Gen. 8:22, Bultmann spoke about God's effectual presence in nature. "We do not speak of God's self-disclosure in nature but we do speak of God's presence in nature," he said.⁹⁶ Lately this kind of emphasis has become more rare in Bultmann's works. But there are many who would hold that the above statement itself gives a theological relevance to the realm of nature even though the mystery of the divine presence which is confessed in it is not given in immediate experience. It still is an affirmation of faith.

In a more recent essay Bultmann has made the following re-

mark: "Ultimately the inadequacy or unsuitability of mythological concepts does not consist in their contradicting the modern, scientific world view, but in the fact that in them, unworldly powers and actions are imagined as worldly powers and actions. Thus there is a confusion of the divine and the earthly, a false identification of the otherworldly with the this-worldly."⁹⁷ Few will deny that this confusion has often taken place in theological discourse, and that there is a constant danger that by means of theological language we seek to "de-mysterize" the mystery of the presence of God by "explaining" it with worldly categories and philosophical concepts. The question arises, however, whether Bultmann is not actually doing this himself, not now in metaphysical terms, but in psychological terms.

F. CHRISTOLOGICAL AND PNEUMATOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Centuries of theological tradition are being challenged by the existentialist interpretation of the gospel. Some might in turn want to challenge this remark on the ground that, after all, Bultmann retains the theme of sin and salvation as the heart of his theological system. In this he distinguishes himself from the liberals of a previous day, but—paradoxically—this fact makes the challenge an even more serious one. Traditional theological categories are being questioned by others, too, in our day, but hardly anyone has presented as radical and as consistent a reconstruction as Bultmann. For this reason we have devoted such an extensive analysis to his thought in this study.

The whole preceding discussion has led to the question of the mystery of the presence of God. In a traditional Christian theological context the basic affirmation is that God has revealed himself supremely in Jesus Christ and that he is now redemptively present with man through the work of the Holy Spirit. This basic affirmation is then worked out in various ways, some of which we shall consider in the following chapters. This chapter will now be concluded with some remarks on the Christological and pneumatological implications of Bultmann's existentialist interpretation of the New Testament.

As we have stated repeatedly, Bultman wants to be a *Christian*

theologian. Sin and salvation are understood in Christian terms. Redemption is always related to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But, as we have also seen, Bultmann vigorously objects to any attempts that seek to establish a historical basis for the Christian faith by tracing the past—in this case the so-called historical Jesus—by means of scientific research. Such a quest of the historical Jesus he regards as both technically impossible and theologically illegitimate.

The quest is impossible because the New Testament is not a collection of "sources" in the usual sense of the word. In the New Testament we are confronted with the *kerygma* of the primitive church, which finds its ground and being in the Easter faith. There and then the proclaimer became the proclaimed. In short, these people are not reporting facts about the past; they are witnessing from a present experience: the encounter with the living Christ. Any attempt to go beyond the *kerygma* in order to get to the real Jesus and to the real facts of his life will prove to be futile.

The quest is also illegitimate, because it seeks to establish a security for faith which is not the security of faith. Faith does not find its certainty in worldly wisdom or scientific demonstration but only in the personal surrender to the Word and the will of God. As Bultmann himself has expressed it, "So one may not go back behind the *kerygma*, using it as a 'source,' in order to reconstruct a 'historical Jesus,' with his 'Messianic consciousness,' his 'inwardness,' or his 'heroism.' That would be precisely the Christ according to the flesh, who is gone. Not the historical Jesus, but Jesus Christ the proclaimed, is Lord."⁸⁸

Bultmann's form-critical studies have led him to a profound skepticism concerning the possibility of attaining reliable knowledge about the Jesus of history. This, however, does not disturb him a bit, since he regards the *kerygma*—Jesus preached as a call to personal decision—as the really essential element in the Christian faith. On this point some of the critique against Bultmann's theology has been concentrated. This is particularly true in the case of Paul Althaus, who has devoted almost an entire book to the issue.⁸⁹ He regards the question concerning the identity of

the exalted Lord with the incarnate Christ as a theologically legitimate one.

Althaus agrees that we cannot go behind the *kerygma* in order to reconstruct a picture of the "real Jesus." *That* quest is indeed theologically illegitimate, but not the question concerning "the relation of the *kerygma* to the history, about which it informs us, and to which it bears witness."¹⁰⁰ Faith is surely not based on certain scientifically ascertainable historical facts. We do not move from history to faith; we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the witness that has led the believer to the encounter contains also a witness to God's saving deeds. The salvation-occurrence that takes place in the personal encounter does not, as far as Althaus and others are concerned, make this content of the witness irrelevant, as if these things could just as well not have taken place.

In this connection Althaus speaks of "the retrospective question,"¹⁰¹ and he contends that the veto which Bultmann *cum suis* have pronounced upon this question is indicative of an attitude indifferent and even hostile to history.¹⁰² The believer, he insists, i.e., the person who has responded to the call for personal decision, is interested in the question concerning the historical ground of the *kerygma*, not in order to escape from the venture of faith into the false security of knowledge without decision, but in order to grasp the full content of the Biblical witness to God's redemptive presence and activity in the world.

Let us admit for the moment that "the retrospective question" is a theologically legitimate one. Then we must still face the question, To what extent can it be executed? On this issue some very interesting developments are taking place which have been most comprehensively outlined and analyzed in James M. Robinson's booklet *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*. He speaks there of the "post-Bultmannian" phase in German theology.¹⁰³ He points out that from the circle of Bultmann's own and most brilliant students—and apparently with his blessing—voices have been raised that advocate a new quest of the historical Jesus. This quest will not be based on the availability of new sources, which, with the aid of the old historical method, would

yield new information, but rather it is inspired by the new insights into the nature of the historical, viz., the insights provided by the existentialist analysis and the resultant concept of the historicity of human existence. As Robinson has expressed it, the possibility of resuming the quest has "been latent in the radically different understanding of history and of human existence which distinguishes the present [quest] from the quest ended in failure."¹⁰⁴

The new quest will not seek to penetrate to a biographical sketch of Jesus' life, nor to a psychological analysis of his inner being, but rather it will seek to recapture his self-understanding. The new historical approach makes this both possible and legitimate. "Jesus' understanding of existence," states Robinson, "his selfhood, and thus in the higher sense his life, is a possible subject of historical research."¹⁰⁵ Later he adds, "This emphasis in the *kerygma* upon the historicity of Jesus is existentially indispensable, precisely because the *kerygma*, while freeing us from a life 'according to the flesh,' proclaims the meaningfulness of life 'in the flesh.'"¹⁰⁶

This brief presentation of the problem must suffice, and we shall not pursue it farther here. We must still turn, however, to another aspect of the Christological question with which Bultmann has dealt quite specifically and which casts some further light on his basic conception of the divine presence. If we confess with the primitive church that God was in Christ—and Bultmann joins in this affirmation of faith—how, then, must we conceive of this divine presence in Christ, and how can we express this reality in theological terms?

Ever since the Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries, which culminated in the formula of Chalcedon, a solution to these problems has been sought mainly with the aid of such categories as "nature," "substance," "person," and "*unio hypostatica*." "The Greek categories of natural science," Bultmann calls them;¹⁰⁷ metaphysical concepts, Gogarten considers them.¹⁰⁸ For Bultmann's thoughts on this matter we must turn particularly to his essay "The Christological Confession of the World Council of Churches."¹⁰⁹

What do we mean when we speak of Christ as God? Some key

sentences from the above essay must be quoted in full. "The decisive question might now be this," states Bultmann, "whether and how far the titles at any time intend to tell us something about the nature of Jesus—how far they describe him, so to speak, objectifying him in his being in himself, or whether or how far they speak of him in his significance for man, for faith. Do they speak—I can formulate it this way too—of his *physis* or of the *Christus pro me?*"¹¹⁰ A further explication follows a little later when Bultmann asserts, "The formula 'Christ is God' is false in every sense in which God is understood as an entity which can be objectivized, whether it is understood in an Arian or Nicene, an Orthodox or a Liberal, sense. It is correct, if 'God' is understood here as the event of God's acting. But my question is, Ought one not rather to avoid such formulas on account of misunderstanding and cheerfully content oneself with saying that he is the Word of God?"¹¹¹

The divinity of Christ, then, refers to "his decisive historical encounter with man,"¹¹² not to an objective and metaphysical quality. In this particular question Bultmann has allies among those who otherwise must be regarded as his adversaries. Oscar Cullmann, for instance, also stresses the point that "Christology is the doctrine of an 'event,' not the doctrine of natures."¹¹³ Karl Barth, although wishing to hold on to the central insight of the Chalcedonian confession, because he feels that it expresses something essential,¹¹⁴ has sought to retranslate the old doctrine into the sphere of history. "We have 'actualized' the doctrine of the incarnation," he wrote, "i.e., we have used the main traditional concepts, *unio*, *communio*, and *communicatio*, as concentrically related terms to describe one and the same ongoing process. We have stated it all (including the Chalcedonian Definition, which is so important in dogmatic history, and rightly became normative) in the form of a denotation and description of a single event."¹¹⁵ Brunner is more critical of the Chalcedonian formula. He calls its two-nature doctrine "an ontological construction."¹¹⁶

Interestingly enough, to the above voices we could add that of an Anglican scholar, namely, W. Norman Pittenger. He calls Brunner's Christology in many ways "the exact opposite" of his own,¹¹⁷ but he, too, does not accept Chalcedon without further

qualification. "It is the self-expressive *action* of God in Christ which is important," he states, "not some description of 'nature' as if they were definite entities or categories of thought which could be discussed in logical terms without reference to the vital realities which they denote."¹¹⁸ In the next chapter it will become quite clear that when Pittenger speaks of the Word Incarnate, he means something very different from Bultmann, who suggests that we should be content to refer to Jesus Christ as the Word of God.

From these few illustrations we can gather that Bultmann's Christological concerns are shared by other scholars from various traditions and that the discussion is in a process of flux at the moment. The peculiar nature of Bultmann's theological reconstruction comes out clearer, however, if we turn our attention to his views concerning the Holy Spirit. For when we speak of the presence of the redemptive reality today, we must inevitably turn to pneumatological categories.

In the preceding discussion we have concluded that Bultmann thinks of redemption exclusively in terms of hearing the Word of forgiveness—faith, new self-understanding, authentic existence, etc. This immediately raises the question of how he deals with pneumatological categories in the New Testament. It is needless to say that at all costs he seeks to avoid any trace of metaphysical thinking that would virtually regard the Holy Spirit as a "something" or substance added to existence. In short, this doctrine, too, must be demythologized. In his Christology, the existentialist theologian will raise objections primarily to the metaphysical connotations of the word "*physis*." In the pneumatology, he will particularly question the traditional treatment of the concept of *gratia*!

It is true, according to Bultmann, that the Old Testament and the popular view in the New Testament regard the Spirit as "a supernatural power, a kind of mysterious fluid, a 'mana.'"¹¹⁹ However, in the New Testament itself he discovers the beginning of a reinterpretation. Paul still might occasionally entertain the notion of the Spirit as a material, but "in the last resort he means by 'Spirit' the possibility of a new life which is opened up in faith, . . . the possibility of a new life which must be appropriated by a deliberate resolve."¹²⁰ Spirit, states Bultmann

elsewhere, "may be called the power of futurity."¹²¹ In other words, the Spirit is indeed the redemptive reality in Christ as it is appropriated by man and as it enters existence, but it is redemptive reality fundamentally as "new outlook on life"—a new ability to live with the past and the future. This has caused H. P. Owen to conclude that in Bultmann's theology "the only relic of power that the Spirit retains is the 'power' of God's forgiving Word."¹²²

John Macquarrie has called the doctrine of the Holy Spirit "one of the obvious gaps in Bultmann's theological exposition."¹²³ Further evidence of this can be found in the fact that Bultmann attributes no theological relevance whatsoever to the New Testament witness concerning the ascension.¹²⁴ For the proponents of an existentialist theology, this article in the creed is a favored illustration of an outmoded and unscientific world view—the three-storied universe! If the doctrine of the ascension is regarded as a statement about cosmology, this is undoubtedly true. Few would wish to take literally the Biblical terminology concerning the ascension of the Lord and his sitting at the right hand of God. But what if we inquire as to the *theological* content of this confession, especially since in the New Testament the references to the ascension are closely related to its witness concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit?

Bultmann is fond of citing the words of Melanchthon to the effect that to know Christ means primarily to know his benefits, rather than the theoretical contemplation of his nature and the mode of his incarnation. In this connection one is reminded of the existential manner in which the Heidelberg Catechism, a sixteenth-century document, raises the question of the ascension. "What benefit do we receive from Christ's ascension into heaven?" it asks in question 49. In other words, these believers, too, were not primarily concerned with cosmological speculations (although they could think in terms of "up there" much more easily than we can today); they were asking about the meaning of faith while taking into consideration the human quest for meaning in life. There ought to be no dispute with Bultmann on the point that all genuinely Christian theology must do this.

We would hold that this is being done by theologians who

claim that the ascension has theological significance, not as a witness to an absent Christ, who has "left" and "gone up," but as a witness to a new and universal presence of Christ the Lord, who "ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things" (Eph. 4:10). The ascension thus announces and interprets the meaning of the era of the interim, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the church, and the apostolate.¹²⁵ We shall enter more deeply into this question in Chapter IV of this study, but we mention it here to point out that there is a tendency among existentialist theologians to reinterpret radically all aspects of Christian doctrine that seem to suggest a redemptive presence beyond the encounter, or otherwise to ignore them.

For Schleiermacher, too, the ascension of Christ was not directly a doctrine of faith, because it could hardly be considered an experience of pious self-consciousness, and because he believed that an impression of Christ in its fullness could just as well be gained without any knowledge of the ascension.¹²⁶ Neither Schleiermacher nor Bultmann wants to offer a mere subjectivism, for both speak of the subject who is in communion with the Eternal—with God. There are numerous differences between them. Michalson has said that "contemporary theology, with the benefit of a Biblically enlightened historiography, is now attempting what Schleiermacher tried without that method."¹²⁷ However that may be, both somehow see theology as the formulation of that which is given in faith, and will consequently have little use for any article of faith that does not directly evolve from the existential experience.

Speaking about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, we are inevitably confronted with the question of the church. The doctrine of the church is important to Bultmann, which is not surprising in view of the fact that he attributes so much to the "*Gemeinde Theologie*" and the experience of the primitive church as far as our understanding of the *kerigma* is concerned. Some have complained about the excessive individualism in Bultmann's thought and consequently in his doctrine of the church.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, Christ in the living experience of the community is central in his thought.¹²⁹ However, it is always a community of individuals that is meant. Neither the idea of the covenant

people of God nor Paul's concept of the Body of Christ is prominent in Bultmann's theology.¹³⁰ In the Old Testament, Bultmann believes, one was seen primarily as a member of the people; in the New Testament one is called as an individual.¹³¹

Bultmann is particularly concerned about the fact that so early in its history the church was changed from a "community of the saved" into "an institution of salvation."¹³² He means that the church became a sacramental community, a community of cultic worship. He has remarked that what the New Testament says about the sacraments is as utterly strange and incomprehensible as what it says about the Spirit,¹³³ and obviously for the same reason, namely, because it savors of metaphysical speculation, objectification, yes, "magic," "a miracle-working rite,"¹³⁴ reification of God and his grace. Once again, it becomes unmistakably clear that the nature of the redemptive reality and the mode of its presence in the world are the key issues in Bultmann's existentialist theology.

We have come to the end of this chapter. From our analysis it must have become obvious that we do not consider the question of the definition of myth the central issue. The philosopher Karl Jaspers insists that the myth must be retained as a "chiffer," or a code, a symbol of the trans-empirical reality, the imageless transcendent. However, he warns, one must not resort to a false objectification, which ascribes a material reality to the myth.¹³⁵ Jaspers finds some vestiges of this in Bultmann's works! The theologian Paul Tillich regards mythological language as "the language of faith,"¹³⁶ and many theologians concur in this view.

The question of the nature of religious language is undoubtedly an important one. Yet, I would agree with Bultmann when he states that, as far as the issues of his theology are concerned, the discussion on the nature of myth will lead astray.¹³⁷ Owen pinpointed the issue correctly when he wrote that Bultmann is mostly concerned with the nature of God's act, rather than with the nature of the symbol through which God's act is known.¹³⁸

The heart of the question is, then, that of the *praesentia Dei*, the manner in which we conceive of the divine presence and the manner in which redemption affects and renews existence. Most

modern students of the Bible would agree that at times it uses mythological language to express its understanding of reality, especially reality as qualified by the saving activity of God. For the existentialist, the understanding of reality means exclusively the understanding of human existence. This, and this alone, they claim, is what the myth seeks to express. Is this true in the Bible? What is the nature of the reality to which the Bible witnesses?¹³⁹ This is the central question in the debate.

How can we conceive of God's presence in the world, and how can we responsibly speak about it in theological terms? We have put particular emphasis on the question of history. Others have called special attention to the question of the natural order. There can be no doubt that scientific developments have influenced our thinking on these realms. Are the old theological categories still adequate in view of this new knowledge? Or should we simply "solve" the problem, as Bultmann does, by remaining silent on the presence of God in nature and history, because we regard this as a theologically irrelevant question, and then concentrate exclusively on the existential realm?

"The world of time and space," writes De Jong in his critical study on Bultmann's theology, "and the infinity of history lie as a no-man's-land between God and man. Only the *kerygma*, as Bultmann conceives of it, breaks through this no-man's-land."¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Bultmann can surprise us by suddenly remarking that "when we do start from Christ, the whole of the world in nature and history can receive the illumination of revelation."¹⁴¹ Whatever this may mean, in view of the imposing structure of Bultmann's theological system as outlined above, one could hardly assume that he would wish to leave room for the traditional concept of sanctifying grace.

Heinrich Ott, who is of the opinion that Bultmann started out with a program and has ended with a doctrine, urges the careful reopening of doors that have been prematurely closed.¹⁴² But what alternative ought to be permitted to enter through the reopened doors? The Catholic tradition is making an earnest bid. It can point to a theology of the Word which is a Logos theology. It has a doctrine of grace that uses the concept of *gratia infusa*, and that grows out of a sacramentalism that knows

of transubstantiation, a changing and transfiguring of the common elements of life through the mysterious presence of the living Christ. But is not all this the metaphysical theology of medieval times that Bultmann seeks to overcome? Even here, modern Catholic scholars could point out that some of their most eminent representatives are moving toward more historical modes of thinking and theologizing. Can the historical and metaphysical approaches be harmonized? In the next chapter we must listen to the Catholic case for a theology of history.

III. THE PROCESS OF TRANSFIGURATION:

the "Catholic-sacramental" approach

The sacraments are in the dimension of our historical situation a visible stature of the heavenly reality of Christ's redemptive rule—of the eschaton.

—H. Schillebeeckx,

in *Fragen der Theologie Heute*, p. 386.

A. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW

1. ROME AND RELIGIOUS REALITY

In the preceding chapter we were repeatedly presented with the following alternative: either existential interpretation with its implied concept of history and the exclusively verbal nature of the revelation, or the objectification of God and the reification (*Verdinglichung*) of the redemptive reality. The many reactions from Roman Catholic scholars to this kerygma theology are an indication of the intense interest with which especially the works of Rudolf Bultmann have been studied in these circles. As Giovanni Miegge has pointed out, in general the polemics have been conducted in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect which is increasingly marking Protestant-Roman Catholic discussions.

There is a definite tendency among Roman Catholic authors to view the existentialist position as a logical outcome of the theology of the Reformation. This is what Karl Adam obviously has in mind when he calls this theology "authentically Protestant."¹ L. Malevez, too, claims that in its central theme this

theology is "simply faithful to the general line of Protestant theology."² This same author, as well as other Roman Catholic writers, then add the observation that this is particularly the case where traditional Reformation theology has been rediscovered in the dialectical theology.³ Bultmann's theology is thus viewed as an essentially logical development of the inner potentialities of the so-called Barthian theology.⁴

We shall take a closer look at the above allegation in the next chapter. In the meantime, what exactly do these authors mean when they say that the weakness of Bultmann's theology is essentially the inherent weakness of all Protestant theology, only now presented in a more consistent and, perhaps, a more concentrated form? The answer, in brief, is that, according to the prevalent Roman Catholic view, redemption in Protestant theology is void of ontological reality. Malevez describes it as "an absence of objective, holy, and sanctifying reality," and he complains that finally in Bultmann everything is reduced to preaching, "and the preaching itself is reduced to this mediocre theme: you are forgiven sinners."⁵

In order to get a clearer idea of what Roman Catholic thinkers consider such a serious and fatal defect in the theology of the Reformation, we shall listen to two scholars who have left the Protestant fold because they found it wanting, and who have gone over to Rome because there they have discovered the plenitude of redemption for which their souls had been longing. The French scholar Louis Bouyer has written about "the spirit and forms of Protestantism"⁶ as one who has had firsthand experience, and the Dutch author W. H. van de Pol writes about "the Christian dilemma"⁷ as a man who has felt it in his own soul.

"The Reformation," claims Van de Pol, "bases faith on the principle that revelation bears the character of a spoken revelation."⁸ Thus we see that the view which we found to be so prevalent among the existentialist theologians is now presented as *the* traditional Protestant position. It is not denied that the Protestants, too, know of a redemptive reality, but for most Roman Catholics it lacks the fullness of grace and truth which they find in their own concept. A declaration of divine forgiveness may be experienced as a reality, but—our Roman Catholic

friends would say—in a theology of the incarnation there is more than a Word that is heard; we know of a mysterious “something”—a new reality, which finds its source in the union of the human and divine natures in Christ, and which somehow diffuses the realm of the mundane realities and elevates them to a higher order.

Van de Pol, in an appendix to his book which is entitled “Faith and Reality in Reformed Protestantism,” makes extensive use of the concepts “word-revelation” and “reality-revelation.” He considers this to be the cardinal difference between Roman and Reformed theology: the former allegedly has a redemptive reality in the “mystical-ontic” sense, whereas the latter is said to lack this.⁹

Louis Bouyer raises the same objections to the Protestant faith he once embraced and then abandoned. Justification, he asserts, deals exclusively with extrinsic justice, “which has nothing real to correspond with it in the person justified.”¹⁰ Time and time again one can hear this accusation expressed in Roman Catholic circles. In other words, it is recognized that Protestants, too, speak of renewal, but it is felt that they lack a true concept of change in one’s inner being. Bouyer states that he finds this especially true in Karl Barth’s magnificent but deficient “theology of the Word.”¹¹ He is convinced that what he calls “Barthism” is wholly incapable of “preaching a salvation that is something real.”¹²

These men, as we have seen, were looking for something more than their understanding and experience of traditional Protestantism could offer them. In Rome they found a “plus” of redemptive reality—something more objective; one would be inclined to say that in the literal sense of the word they found something more “substantial.”

It is not difficult to discern how all this is related to the fundamental theme of this study. After all, we are primarily concerned with the question of how the redemption in Christ, proclaimed to us in the gospel, relates itself to historical existence. Later we shall return to the question of whether the scholars mentioned above have really presented a correct picture

of the traditional Protestant position. For the moment it will suffice to observe that the Roman Catholic concept of an ontic reality that changes being as physical existence must have far-reaching consequences for one's whole outlook on the question of redemption and existence, and the problem of salvation and history.

In order to see how this is worked out in practice, we must look at some Roman Catholic theologies of history. Before we do this, however, it will be well to spell out in a little more detail how Roman Catholic theologians conceive of redemptive reality, especially with respect to the concept of *infused grace*, its source, the manner in which it is communicated or channeled into historical existence, and its effect on the worldly realities.

2. NATURE AND GRACE

It is sometimes said that the fundamental issue for Protestantism is that of sin and grace, whereas for Rome it is more the question of nature and grace which comes to the forefront. This way of stating the difference between the two theological traditions is in essence correct. Luther's heart cried out for a merciful God, who would deliver him from the terrible burden of guilt that weighed so heavily upon his soul. He found the answer in the message of the gospel, whereby he was assured that God forgives sinners, and that, wholly on the basis of Christ's meritorious sacrifice, he declares righteous and acceptable as his children those who in themselves are unrighteous. *Sola gratia!*

We quoted Malevez' remark that if this were made the exclusive theme of preaching, as he believes Bultmann has done, it must be regarded as a mediocre one. This is not to say that this aspect of the gospel would be totally lacking in the Roman Catholic view of redemption. No, the thought, rather, is that this theme as the exclusive or even the central one in preaching would present too limited a concept of redemption, focusing the attention too one-sidedly on that aspect of reality which encompasses the existential or experiential life of the individual. The Roman Catholic believer feels that he is engaged in the broader quest and the more profound inquiry when he raises the question,

How is nature—the whole created order—restored to its original being, to the status of the good, or rather, to the complete and integrated creation that existed before the Fall?

Roman Catholic thought looks upon the original creation essentially in terms of two levels: nature and supernature. It is held that before the Fall these two existed in complete harmony. However, the Fall has broken the harmony and has brought about disintegration; nature has lost its superstructure—the *donum superadditum*—and has thus become incomplete, is, so to say, injured. Through sanctifying grace, nature can be restored to its original state.

This way of looking at things gives the Roman Catholic doctrine of man—at least, in the eyes of a Protestant—its optimistic character. In the Fall, man has supposedly lost his *justitia originalis*, due to the fact that he lost sanctifying grace. The basic constitution of human nature, however, has not been destroyed, nor has it really been diminished.¹³ Man is seen as having retained his basic humanity. The natural man is therefore not helpless, although, in a sense, he is hopeless. Since, according to this view, the noetic effects of sin have been less than the ethical effects, man is seen as particularly capable of a certain knowledge of God by way of natural reason.¹⁴ Furthermore, he is considered able to perform certain deeds of obedience to the divine law, although those are not considered sufficient for eternal salvation. In order to love God, man needs the superadded gift of grace.¹⁵ In other words, these scholars think of justification in terms of *infused grace*. One is not just *declared* righteous, but *made* righteous. "Justification," said Aquinas, "means a movement toward justice."¹⁶

It can be said then that, according to the above view, sin has not affected the creation as such; it "merely" has deprived man of the gift of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural virtues. The mainstream of Protestant theology has traditionally defended a much more radical view of the consequences of the Fall. Somewhere in a work by the Dutch scholar O. Noordmans, I read the statement that if—after the Fall—one would deduct the sinner from the man, one would have nothing left, because the Fall reaches as far as the Creation.

In accordance with the more optimistic Roman Catholic view concerning man, we find an emphasis on the idea of human cooperation in redemption. This is not meant as a cooperation apart from grace, but rather as one that takes place through grace. Here the Roman Catholic teachings concerning Mary, the mother of our Lord, become particularly significant. Considering the titles attributed to her, one might begin to wonder whether she is still regarded as a fully human being—someone like ourselves. The answer is, "Yes, she is!" It is precisely as a human being that she is considered the paradigm of what man can do in cooperation with divine grace if he lets himself be used as God's instrument. "Let it be to me according to your word."

All this is confessed in order to magnify the grace of God. God is regarded as the sole cause of all grace, and the initiative is ever his. As Aquinas has said, "Even the good action of [man's] free will, by which he is made ready to receive the gift of grace, is an action of his free will as moved by God."¹⁷ Nevertheless, there is an optimistic note in the Roman Catholic anthropology, and, as we shall see later, this same optimistic outlook is reflected in some major Roman Catholic theologies of history.

In Roman Catholic theology, as in all Christian theology, redemption means redemption in Christ. He is believed to be the supreme revelation of God's saving power and purpose, as well as the source of all God's benefits toward us. Together with the universal church we recite the Apostles' Creed and we confess God's great deeds in Christ, his incarnation, his life and ministry, and above all his death, resurrection, and glorious ascension to the right hand of the Father. But although we hold a body of confessional truth in common, there is quite a difference among Christian theologians in where the accent is put on the various aspects of God's dealings in Christ. For instance, to those who stress a "reality-revelation," the "word of the cross" and its implied message of forgiveness will be precious and very important indeed, but they would hasten to point out that the gospel must be firmly rooted in the incarnation, lest we fall into the pitfall of a one-sided theology of the Word. The incarnation is then seen, in turn, in its intimate relationship to the Creation. This is an important point that we must further clarify.

One can speak of the incarnation in a broader and a narrower sense. When one uses the term in the broader sense, one refers to the coming of Christ in the flesh (the *assumptio carnis*) as well as to the whole life and ministry of the Lord while he was on earth in the form of a human person. In this section of our study we are concerned in particular with a view of the incarnation in the narrower sense, where the emphasis falls specifically on the *assumptio carnis*, the assumption by the divine Logos of our human nature. Later we shall meet with the same outlook in Anglo-Catholic and Orthodox Catholic writers, as well as in incarnationist theologians among other traditions. The incarnation as *assumptio carnis*, implying the hypostatic union between the divine and the human nature in Christ, is seen as in itself a source of redemptive reality even if the cross and the work of atonement are not taken into account. The incarnation, says Christopher Dawson, is "the marriage of heaven and earth," and as such it has a permanently redemptive significance.¹⁸

We must see clearly what these people have in mind. They hold to the view that in Jesus Christ, i.e., in the hypostatic union of the divine and the human natures, a new reality has entered the world which contains the promise for all existence. On the other hand, it is stressed that the new reality must not be conceived of as so novel that it would bear no relationship to the original Creation. Quite a few scholars in the Catholic tradition are much concerned that a close connection shall be maintained between the two: the Creation and the re-creation. They are therefore fond of speaking of the incarnation as the completion of the Creation, or they will refer to Christ as the perfecter of the Creation.

In this connection we ought to mention the old question expressed by the phrase *motivum incarnationis*. The query goes like this: Would the incarnation have taken place even if man had not sinned? Duns Scotus, in the thirteenth century, answered the question in the affirmative, whereas Thomas Aquinas gave a negative answer. There are an increasing number of theologians in the Catholic tradition today who take the affirmative stand on this question. They are agreed that the incarnation was not per se an emergency measure for the salvation of a fallen world, but

that it would have occurred anyhow as a fulfillment of that which had been begun in the Creation. They would admit that the Fall now has made the work of atonement necessary and that sanctifying grace is now needed to renew a sinful nature. Consequently, the Fall has made a difference in the manner and the role of the incarnate life of the Logos, but the incarnation as a union of the human and the divine was in itself already inherent in the Creation.

Catholic scholars are always afraid that in Protestantism too great a chasm is posited between the world of divine realities and the world of earthly realities, especially between the divine and the human. Such a chasm between God and man, claims Emile Mersch, such a "finite-infinite dualism," is "the underlying metaphysical presupposition" of the whole Reformation.¹⁹ Indeed, God is transcendent. These scholars certainly would not deny this. But transcendence may not imply, they say, a separation in such a radical fashion that an absolute distinction is posited between God and the world. There is, according to H. Fries, a *Grundverhältnis*—an underlying relationship—between God and man that is grounded in the Creation itself.²⁰ This idea has come to expression in the traditional doctrine of *analogia entis*, and in the recently much emphasized concept of *participatio*.

The concept of the analogy of being seeks to express simultaneously God's immanence and his transcendence. The thought behind this doctrine is that there exists such an analogy of being between God and man by virtue of the divine creative act. This is how God ordained it in the Creation, and he sustains it through his continued presence. But remember, it is an analogy, not an identity! God is God, and man is man, but ever, whether he likes it or not, man is in the presence of God.

The concept of *participatio* tends to stress the positive aspect of the God-man relationship. We noticed before that the incarnation is frequently discussed in its relationship to the Creation in the sense that the incarnation is seen as a completion and fulfillment of what somehow is already present, or at least promised, in the Creation. A strongly organic way of looking at things is to be found here. This comes out clearly, too, when one not only looks

back from the incarnation to the Creation but also looks forward to the church, and one is introduced to the view that the church is the prolongation or the extension of the incarnation. Mersch, in his aforementioned dogma-historical study on the Mystical Body, admits that in Roman Catholic circles there are two divergent positions on this question, both of which he regards as fundamentally orthodox. The one is more ontological (characterized by its realism and mysticism), whereas the other views the reality of the Mystical Body more in terms of the moral order. Mersch leaves no doubt that he counts himself among those who prefer the former view, which sets forth a real and ontological solidarity between Christ and his church.²¹

It sounds strange to Protestant ears to hear it declared that "the church is Christ."²² Does this mean identification? No, Mersch would reply, it does not, for this would lead to a dangerous kind of "panchristism." Nevertheless, he would continue, the statement is true by virtue of participation.²³ This seems a subtle distinction. Mersch, however, is expressing the idea that the believers are not really and absolutely Christ himself, but that the church does share in the human-divine nature and thus continues in a mystical-invisible form the historical life of Christ on earth.

"The church," Mersch affirms, "continues Christ; she develops all the powers of sanctification that are his."²⁴ How does she do this? Well, supremely through the sacrifice of the Mass, but then in a broader sense also by means of the whole sacramental system. The sacramental life affects first of all the believer who is within the sphere of the true church, but somehow all reality is incorporated into Christ (primarily by virtue of the *assumptio carnis* and the *unio hypostatica!*), and is consequently in some sense and in some degree affected by the life of grace, which, from the church and her sacramental ministry, is diffused, as it were, throughout existence.

A scholar like Mersch does not recoil from the statement that the doctrine of incorporation includes a doctrine of divinization.²⁵ In short, according to this view, sanctification in Christ involves a real deification. It is held that the incarnation is still taking place in history. This concept does not preclude the

doctrine of the one and indivisible incarnation of Jesus Christ, with its unique and incommunicable aspects. No, the one and unique incarnation includes the idea of a sort of "collective incarnation," an extension of that one incarnation which is somehow universal and which in essence is a progressive extension of the hypostatic union in Christ.²⁶ In other words, what was revealed in Christ contains a universal promise: the marriage of heaven and earth will at one time be complete.

This survey of some basic Roman Catholic theological categories has been very brief and limited. One finds among Roman Catholic scholars a diversity of emphases, a variety of terminology, and a difference in the degree to which they adhere to the traditional Thomistic position, and yet I believe that in the brief exposition above we have indicated a truly central perspective in Roman Catholic theology as such. M. C. Smit, who has written an excellent study on Roman Catholic theologies of history, has come to the conclusion that a definite shift in emphasis can be observed in contemporary Catholic thought, a change in accent from the cross to the incarnation.²⁷ This, it seems to me, is a correct observation, with which, incidentally, a number of leading Roman Catholic scholars would concur. It is a development that has great significance for the theology of history.

We have referred to the organic viewpoint in Catholic theology. Creation, incarnation, church, sacramental grace and its power of renewal, the Kingdom—all are seen in organic relationship, the one flowing into the other, as it were. Christopher Dawson points with pride to this aspect of Catholic thought and considers it especially well suited for the development of an integrated view of redemption and history. For, says he, "if Christianity is the religion of the incarnation, and if the Christian interpretation of history depends on the continuation and extension of the incarnation in the life of the church, Catholicism differs from other forms of Christianity in representing the incarnational principle in a fuller, more concrete, and more organic sense."²⁸ How is this worked out in practice? We are now ready to outline an answer to this question.

3. THE "ELEVATION" OF ALL THINGS

As we turn to some Roman Catholic attempts to formulate a theology of history, we do so in the realization that we are quite selective in our presentation. There is no attempt here to treat the subject exhaustively. The interest in the issue has been great in Roman Catholic circles during the past decades, and the body of literature that has been produced is voluminous indeed. Whence, one might ask, this intense interest in the question of history? Must it be attributed to the fact that we are living in a time of great upheaval and rapid historical changes, with their accompanying crises? Smit, in his aforementioned study, is of the opinion that this might be a contributing factor in some cases, as for instance in the works of Jacques Maritain, who is greatly preoccupied with the problem of secularism. But Smit maintains that the main source of this interest must be sought in internal developments within Roman Catholic theology itself, and he then mentions a shift in accent in Roman Catholic theology "from the abstract to the concrete, from the static to the dynamic—specifically, from the emphasis on immutable essential being to an interest in the progressively evolving historical reality—from the dialectical-rational view to the 'mysterious' and the religious elements, . . . from the separation of the natural and supernatural to their synthesis."²⁹

This is an interesting new development in Roman Catholic theology, for by and large it has not been strong on this point. Christopher Dawson admits this. He has pointed out that "the classical tradition of Christian philosophy as represented by Thomism has devoted comparatively little attention to the problem of history."³⁰ It can be said that, in the main, Roman Catholic theology has tended to utilize metaphysical categories rather than historical ones. This has often given it a static quality that cannot easily be applied to the dynamics of history or to a theology of the mighty deeds of God. However, in spite of the words cited above, Dawson still maintains that the basic ingredients for such a theology were there. He is of the opinion that "the Thomist doctrine of the concordance of nature and grace" could have been adopted as a basis for the interpretation of

history and could thus have led to a truly Catholic philosophy of history.³¹ As we shall note presently, the major Roman Catholic theologies of history today are formulated within this traditional framework of nature and grace.

There is a searching going on, and much of the work is still in flux. It is difficult to find the right theological categories with which to approach the manifold and complex questions of history. A scholar of the stature of Hans Urs von Balthasar does not have the impression that Roman Catholic theology has arrived with respect to this problem. He speaks of a few "building stones" for such a theology that are beginning to fall into a pattern. However, an integrated Catholic philosophy and theology of history is, in his judgment, still lacking.³² The same volume of essays by Roman Catholic scholars in which this observation by Von Balthasar is to be found also contains the warning that, despite all the good work done by both Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars, we still have not penetrated theologically into the reality that modern man acknowledges as history, and the thought is added that this is the more astonishing in view of the fact that it was precisely the Christian faith which made the modern concept of history possible!³³

The first "building stones" are worthy of consideration, however.³⁴ Let us first return for a moment to Mersch's idea of a "divinization," or "deification," which supposedly is the result of a progressive extension of the incarnation in the church and then, through the church, in the world. As he makes clear, in the church the union would not really be hypostatic, as in the case of Christ, but, rather, pneumatic, through participation. All this leads to what Mersch rather daringly calls a "collective incarnation." This is strong language, but then, it must be kept in mind that Mersch belongs to the school that wants to speak in very realistic-sacramental terms about redemption. When this basic perspective is applied to a theology of history, it leads to the view that all reality is somehow affected by the incarnation and that a kind of organic process is going on by which all reality is being changed, primarily through the intermediary of the sacramental ministry of the church.

Many Roman Catholic writers prefer to be a bit more reserved

in their language than Mersch, but if I read the literature correctly, the fundamental perspective of most of the Roman Catholic authors who seek to relate redemption to history is quite similar to the one outlined above. There are divergent views; there are disagreements, for instance, on the question of how much positive value, if any, must be attributed to nature independent from grace. But the basic framework remains the same, namely that of nature and grace.

As to the question mentioned in the previous paragraph, Smit has pointed out that there is a growing tendency in Roman Catholic circles to attribute a more positive value to "nature alone," i.e., to reject the notion that nature is a mere passive substratum for supernatural grace.³⁵ It is said that it has some value in and of itself. Behind this movement can be seen the fear that a dualism or antithesis would be posited between salvation-history and universal history, Christianity and culture, revelation and reason, etc. Karl Rahner, for instance, feels that the views of those who are inclined to separate nature and grace too radically suffer from what has sometimes been called a certain *Extrinssezismus*.³⁶ In other words, there is not enough interpenetration between the two realms. In short, this approach is too Protestant! Nature, of course, does need supernature in order to come to completion and perfection. The representatives of the above view, although admitting this, wish to set over against this the fact that there is a degree of readiness, yes, a reaching out in all reality, for perfection. They would speak of a *tendance ontologique* and stress the positive orientation of nature toward grace. After all, they would claim, imperfection is incongruous with the essence of being. As we noticed, there are these differences of opinion and these varieties of view among Roman Catholic scholars, but as was also mentioned before, they do not preclude a basic agreement in perspective and approach.

We shall now begin our sketchy survey with Jean Daniélou's book *The Lord of History*. He does not share the automatic-organic views, with their implied historical optimism, of some other scholars in this tradition. But he, too, immediately takes his starting point in the incarnation. "Nothing can ever again divide human nature from the Divinity," he states. "There is no

possibility of a relapse; mankind is essentially saved."⁸⁷ In other words, the union of mankind and Godhead in Jesus Christ has been accomplished once and for all (11); it is of a permanent nature and has a continuous effect.

In this Christological position, Daniélou finds a welcome approach to the problem of history. He does not hesitate to assert that "the dogmatic definition of the two natures in Christ by the Council of Chalcedon illuminates the whole theology of history" (183). With this position we are indeed very far removed from the views of Bultmann and his disciples, who, as we stressed earlier, see in the Chalcedonian formula an unhistorical-meta-physical approach to Christology and therefore to history also.

From the incarnation we then move, via the church, to the view of the continued sacred history. Daniélou, as might be expected, is quite explicit in his rejection of an existentialist view of history. He sees significance in the continuity of the historical sequence; the course of time is important to him and must not, in his judgment, be swallowed up in the moment of crisis and decision. It is therefore not surprising at all that he looks with a good deal of favor upon the work of Oscar Cullmann. Karl Barth's theology, however, remains a "sort of post-Christian gnosticism," as far as Daniélou is concerned (10).

The church is the central reality in this theology of history. This, too, is not surprising, for in the being and the working of the Christian church we presumably have in essence the presence of the next world itself, albeit in the form of a mystery (24). "The only real society now is that of God's people, the church," states Daniélou. This, to him, is the most important fact of history—that there is a church with a sacramental ministry. The sacramental life in our midst through the ministry of the church constitutes the outstanding event of our time, according to this author, and not the occurrences that receive the newspaper headlines. Just as Christ must be seen as the decisive event at the center of history, thus at the present juncture of time the sacraments must be regarded as the decisive events (203).

From this perspective Daniélou defends the thesis that sacred history is really the whole of history. It alone is real history in the ontological sense of the word. Secular history is seen as

entirely comprised within sacred history, and is declared to be a distinct and limited subdivision thereof (27).

We come, then, to the following fundamental vision. Sacred history begins with the Creation. Then, via the incarnation, the church, and the sacramental life, it continues in the present and places all reality in an eschatological framework. Daniélou's thought is strongly eschatological in orientation. Underlying this fact is his belief that what has taken place in Jesus Christ is the beginning of the transfiguration of the whole universe. We possess the future in hope, or, to say it more correctly, the future is with us now in the Mystery, but its consummation and manifestation will come in the future. The interim, according to Daniélou, is the time of *mission*. He is among the Roman Catholic scholars who today present a strong emphasis on the apostolate, the total mission of the total church. It belongs to the heart of his theology of history. "This, then," he states without qualification, "is the purport and import of current history: the Christian mission" (11). The interim thus becomes a period of waiting and preparation through the ministry of the church.

Daniélou refers to his position as "an initiated eschatology" (272). We have stressed before how, in Catholic theology, the incarnation is frequently seen in its relationship to the Creation. In the total perspective of this theology one can as well say, however, that the incarnation belongs to eschatology (194). When the interim is called the time of mission, this must not be understood exclusively in terms of preaching and the call to repentance. That again would be regarded as too Protestant. Sacramentally speaking, something happens in the realm of being, and this has its effect on the sociopolitical and cultural realities. In a word: redemption affects all history.

When speaking about the cultural and historical realities, Daniélou makes use of two basic concepts: embodiment and detachment. He holds that Christianity must be incarnated in particular cultures, but that this never ought to lead to an identification. Simultaneously with the embodiment there must be maintained an element of detachment (25). Why? Because otherwise the church will always be in danger of declining with a perishing culture. In other words, at a certain place and time

Christianity will become incarnated or embodied in the appropriate Christendom for that time, This happened in the Middle Ages, and Daniélou is convinced that it was a good thing. But Christianity must never completely tie itself to any of these cultural forms. They are provisional and transitory, "garments to be put away when they are worn out" (26). Christianity must ever be ready to be reincarnated in new cultural forms. Yes, believes Daniélou, there is a plain and pressing requirement that such be done in the resurgent civilizations of our time—the Oriental, the Near Eastern, and the African (35).

Whatever one may think of this approach, one must admit that in a sense we are presented here with a wide and wonderful perspective. In this view of initiated eschatology, Daniélou seeks to define what he considers to be the paradox of Christ: the need to integrate theologically the complete fulfillment of redemption in Jesus Christ with the Biblical witness concerning the eschatological expectation—the redemption that is yet to come. We shall be confronted with the same question in later sections of this study, especially when we examine the theology of the Dutch Reformed scholar A. A. van Ruler.

Some Roman Catholic thinkers consider Daniélou's theology too eschatological in its basic orientation. Among them is Gustav Thils, who in a two-volume work has developed a "theology of the terrestrial realities."³⁸ Thils feels that in Daniélou's thinking the temporal and terrestrial realities are too much dissociated from the divine life. There is too little of the incarnation in this theology, according to Thils, too little emphasis on what the supernatural realities do to the terrestrial realities in the here and now, too little attention paid to the newness that is already transforming all things. In short, the emphasis on detachment strikes too eschatological a note, as far as he is concerned (II, 40 ff.).

Thils's own attempt at formulating a theology of history is an ambitious one indeed! His theology of history includes a theology of culture in the broadest sense of the word. Yes, one could say that it implies a "theology of all things," for nothing less than that is his goal. With approval he quotes the words of J. F. Donoso-Cortés that "a civilization is always the reflection of a

theology" (I, 15). One gets the impression that he is more concerned than Daniélou that the church shall adhere closely to the medieval concept of a Christian society. He is eager to find a new harmony between Christianity and culture by *returning* to the valuable aspects of the medieval period, which, he believes, have been neglected (I, 20, 112), although he at the same time desires to move beyond the medieval synthesis (I, 128 f.).

This scholar is greatly concerned about the danger of over-spiritualization. He wants us to remain faithful to the earth. He warns his readers not to think of sanctifying grace primarily in terms of the residents in a monastery, but rather in terms of the "lay saints" who labor in the world as engineers, soldiers, factory workers, or mothers of a household (I, 37). Again, we find the strong belief that all things have been redeemed by Christ. Thils never tires of reiterating this theme. He admits that he cannot furnish extended lists of Biblical proof texts, but then he consoles himself with the thought that there are not so many specific texts of the particular Roman Catholic doctrine of Mary, either! (I, 61.) The Scriptural data that we do possess, especially in Ephesians and Colossians, are considered quite sufficient. The remaining problems, he feels, can be worked out by the teaching church.

There is a strong emphasis on pneumatology in Gustav Thils. We call attention to this here because later we shall be deeply involved in pneumatological questions when we discuss how some Protestant theologians, who reject an exclusively kerygmatic theology, seek to develop a theology of history and culture along the lines of a doctrine of the Holy Spirit. We recall the indictments against the theology of Bultmann to the effect that he has a wholly inadequate doctrine of the Holy Spirit. We are dealing here with a key question in our study!

The work of the Holy Spirit, according to Thils, can be called ontological, but its action is also psychological, physical, and external. In other words, the Spirit who touches the soul and enlightens the mind also renews the body and in a mysterious way affects the sociopolitical and cultural realities. Christ exercises his redeeming work on earth *in Spirito!* (I, 86, 159; II, 63 f.)

This reminds one of Calvin's frequent use of the term "*spirituali modo*," but it will become clear later that the latter arrives at this concept along a very different theological way. For the moment, let us just note that the universalism (II, 67) which Thils detects in the Bible is indeed a long way removed from the existentialism discussed in the previous chapter.

As could be expected, the pneumatology that Thils develops is, in genuine Catholic fashion, firmly rooted in the incarnation. Once again we meet with the fundamental idea that through the church, and supremely through its sacramental ministry, all things are consecrated and made into a prefiguration of the heavenly Jerusalem (I, 147 f.).

All terrestrial realities, maintains Thils, possess their own authentic ontological glorification, which is a reflection of the Trinitarian life in God himself, with its inherent order, union, love, and harmony (I, 138). This remark implies that nothing is completely separated from the divine life, even before the effectual work of sanctifying grace has become operative. In this view we discern another attempt to bring nature and grace into a more intimate relationship. All things, it is taught here, according to their being, participate, in a greater or lesser degree, in the divine perfection. It is true that there is sinful rebellion and widespread refusal to be subjected to God, but the Christian knows with certainty that a "Satanocracy" shall ever be out of the question. Quite to the contrary, we move farther and farther away from such a possibility, for through the intermediary of the church, the Holy Spirit affects a culture that is "*plus en plus 'chrétienne'*" (I, 161), ever more Christian.

A cosmic perspective underlies this theology. Grace is seen as bringing about a universal transfiguration. This Thils calls authentic progress—when the divine Spirit increases its transfiguring rule over the world of the flesh (II, 57). He does not favor an eschatology that would be too continuous and too emphatic in its counter thesis that, after all, the world is still sinful and bad. Of course, there still is expectation; the Parousia will bring a fuller realization of the new being that is now already present. In the interim we receive the beginning of re-

newal; in the end there will be plenitude. But to say, as Daniélou does, that now the new world is present in the Mystery, whereas it will be manifested in the end, no; this, according to Thils, is inadequate (II, 77). There is more than presence in the Mystery; there is presence in visual reality, as new cultural statutes and embodiments are created, for this involves a certain manifestation of the new heaven and the new earth in the here and now.

A spirit of "optimism" breathes through this theology. All things are now seen as "*informé*" by the Holy Spirit (I, 89). The time will come when this will be true to such a degree that humanity and the world will share in all the attributes and qualities of the Holy Spirit (II, 102). This fullness of redemption will then be the Kingdom of God.

Thils, as well as Daniélou, seems to prefer the concept of transfiguration above that of deification. The former emphatically states that the terrestrial realities remain in a sense profane, just as man, when he is transformed by grace into the likeness of God, remains a man in the full sense of the word (I, 88). Jacques Maritain, who has been much preoccupied with the problem of history, seems to prefer an even more cautious concept, namely, that of "elevation."

In his book *On the Philosophy of History*, Maritain affirms that the world—and this includes the entire order of nature—"is in actual fact in vital connection with the universe of the Kingdom of God."³⁹ Once more, we meet with an attempt to ascribe to nature, and thus to the whole realm of profane history, a positive value. As Maritain likes to express it, nature is "*super-elevated in its own order.*"⁴⁰ If one denies this, he says, one will be forced to accept a naturalism that lets nature run its own course separately from any contact with grace.

In the work of this scholar we find the same basic views delineated above. Via the church, grace is operative as a historical force of the first magnitude. It creates its own religiopolitical structures, as happened supremely in the Middle Ages with its *respublica Christiana*, its sacral Christian civilization.⁴¹ As far as Maritain is concerned, this kind of development is in accordance with the deepest intents of redemptive reality. This is the

divinely appointed manner in which grace perfects nature.

Maritain realizes that under the present circumstances it would be virtually impossible for us to repeat the medieval venture with its peculiar sociopolitical manifestations. He believes, however, that through the intermediary of the church, we need to find a new form of sacral Christendom. This he regards as the only answer to the current process of secularization, namely, a culture that is molded and inspired by Christian perspectives. Christian concepts and presuppositions thus find their embodiment in a sociopolitical order.

In this theology of history, too, we find a certain optimism, a Christian belief in progress. Maritain is confident that we are approaching a new era, the age of an integral humanism, which finds its inner source and life in the incarnation. On the other hand, Maritain's theology retains a strong element of *theologia crucis*. He can see the church as being in a sense already the irruption of the Kingdom, but then "the Kingdom in the state of pilgrimage and crucifixion."⁴²

Our survey has been brief and in a sense arbitrarily selective. We have been more concerned with focusing the attention on a central perspective than with discussing the diversities among Roman Catholic scholars, although we have called attention to some of the latter too. Despite interesting and significant varieties of view, at the heart of all these theologies is, as Smit has correctly pointed out, the traditional theological framework of nature and grace, although this theme is now frequently expressed in terms of Christ and history. The trend among Roman Catholic scholars is definitely to stress synthesis rather than antithesis, and thus to incorporate all of history, yes, the whole universe, into an integral theology of renewal through sanctifying grace, mediated through the sacramental ministry of the church, which in turn is frequently described as prolongation, continuation, or extension of the incarnation. Thus we can notice a shifting in accent from the cross to the *assumptio carnis*. This central concept introduces the note of "realism" into the dominant Roman Catholic theologies of history. To some this implies a profound meaningfulness, to others an outmoded metaphysics.

B. SOME ANGLO-CATHOLIC VOICES

A few words must be said now about the Anglo-Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Once again we are deeply aware of the fragmentary nature of our exposition. We are interested in discovering some main aspects and emphases in a theological tradition, and then we want to see how these become reflected in the theological approach to history. In this section we are referring to the whole Anglican communion, and the heading of this section does not mean to suggest that we shall analyze in particular the views of those who regard themselves as the only true Catholic wing in the Anglican communion. It is to be kept in mind that within the Anglican Church, with its strong emphasis on "comprehensiveness," there is a complex interaction of many views and theological perspectives. Among the theologians of this tradition in particular one can find a great diversity of theological positions.

Leonard Hodgson has sought to express this genius of the Anglican tradition for "comprehensiveness" in the following quotation: "The Reformation was carried forward by a dialectical process due to the continuance within the church of Catholic-minded conservatives, Protestant-minded radicals, and those whose first care was for reasonable scholarship. The one thing which has been characteristic of the Church of England as a whole has been and still is the fact that it contains these three elements, maintains them in tension with one another, and is the locus of their tripartite dialectic."⁴³

When dealing with this tradition, we must therefore be extra careful in our generalizations about *the* Anglo-Catholic position. Nevertheless, one generalization about present-day Anglican theology can probably be made without evoking much dispute. Dr. Arthur Michael Ramsey, presently Archbishop of Canterbury, stated it concisely when he said that "modern Anglican theology owes many of its characteristics to the central place held within it by the incarnation."⁴⁴ This has been particularly true since the publication of *Lux Mundi* in 1889, a book that

bears the subtitle "A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation."⁴⁵ Since that time, Anglican theology, and especially, as Lewis B. Smedes adds correctly, Anglo-Catholic theology in the narrower sense, has been a theology of the incarnation.⁴⁶ Ramsey, as did J. K. Mozley before him,⁴⁷ calls the publication of this study the beginning of a new era in Anglican thought.

The book *Lux Mundi* was actually a collection of essays published under the editorial leadership of the eminent Anglican scholar Charles Gore. The purpose of the book is stated in the introduction, where we read that this work represents an "attempt to put the Catholic faith into its right relation to modern intellectual and moral problems."⁴⁸ In these studies we find an intense interest in cultural questions, and a great concern with the problem of what today is called the communication of the gospel to modern man.

During this period in Anglican theology, and in the case of some theologians ever since that time, one finds a certain preoccupation with the idea of development. In essence the whole venture was an attempt to show that modern thinking, and in particular evolutionary modes of thought, were not necessarily in opposition to Christian theological categories, but could well be reconciled with a theology of the incarnation.

In this book J. R. Illingworth wrote an essay entitled "The Incarnation in Relation to Development."⁴⁹ In this chapter we hear repeated the now familiar complaint against Protestant theologies, namely, that they show a serious one-sidedness in perspective because of an overemphasis on the cross and the atonement for sins. This sort of preoccupation with soteriology will, Illingworth believed, inevitably lead to a partial presentation of Christianity, because thus "the religion of the incarnation was narrowed into the religion of the atonement."⁵⁰ It is interesting to observe in a rather parenthetical fashion that men like Illingworth will select John and Paul as the clearest Biblical examples of theologians of the incarnation, while Bultmann portrays these same writers as the inaugurators of the kind of existentialist emphasis that he presents today. Illingworth ap-

provingly quotes the words of Aquinas: "The incarnation is the exaltation of human nature and consummation of the universe."⁵¹

It is generally recognized that Anglican thought in this period was greatly influenced by the works of B. F. Westcott, of whom Ramsey states that "he lived to see the new century with an optimism drawn from his incarnational theology and his conviction that Christianity and progress went hand in hand together."⁵² The title of one of Westcott's major works, *Christus Consummator*, indicates a theme we have noticed before in Catholic writers, namely, that there is an intimate relationship between the incarnation and the Creation in the sense that the former should be seen as the crown and the fulfillment of the latter, and not as an emergency measure made necessary by the reality of sin.

We have had ample opportunity to observe that this kind of incarnational theology presents one with tremendous possibilities for a theology of history and culture. The inherent sense of organic development calls forth, as it were, a theology of history. The whole structure breathes a spirit of universalism. Illingworth, in a rather reckless fashion, it would seem, declares in the previously cited essay that "secular civilization is, . . . in the Christian view, nothing less than the providential correlative and counterpart of the incarnation."⁵³ No dichotomy! Continuity and harmony are key concepts in this theological approach. As we noticed in Roman Catholic theology, this is often the basis for the note of optimism to be found in them.

From this point of view, severe criticism is at times leveled against those who represent other approaches. W. Norman Pittenger, in his recent book *The Word Incarnate*, expresses his concern about what he considers to be dangerous docetic tendencies in some contemporary theologies, which seem to be excessively afraid of portraying God as being involved in the realities of time and space. He is particularly critical of a concept of revelation that leaves room only for a momentary breaking through of the beyond into the present. In his Christology he wishes to avoid all terminology that would suggest that the coming of Jesus Christ was an "intrusion" or a catastrophic

"eruption" from another realm of human life and experience. He wants to have nothing to do with the idea of "a stupendous projection from eternity into time."⁵⁴

Those acquainted with recent theological literature will immediately sense a protest here against certain trends among the dialectical theologians. Emil Brunner, especially, is singled out for strong words of criticism. Pittenger complains that he is primarily concerned with soteriology in the strict sense of forgiveness of sins,⁵⁵ and that he seems to adhere to "an almost verbal sense of revelation"⁵⁶ while totally neglecting the aspect of man's becoming a sharer of the divine nature. Thus once more a Protestant theologian is accused of lacking a sense of revelational reality; a word-revelation is set over against a reality-revelation. There is no doubt that Pittenger's complaint has a solid basis in fact as far as Bultmann's kerygma theology is concerned, and, as we shall see later, also as far as a number of other leading theologians during the early developments of the dialectical theology were concerned.

When he begins to delineate his own position, Pittenger quotes favorably the words of Bérulle to the effect that the incarnation is "the manner and mode of all of God's work in his world." This view can be summarized as follows: "This world is an incarnational world."⁵⁷ As is well known, William Temple wrote about "the sacramental universe,"⁵⁸ and he meant virtually the same thing by it, for both these scholars stand in a tradition of Anglican writers, who see an almost continuous line, yes, an organic development, from the Creation to the incarnation, and then, via the church and her sacramental system, to the renewal of all things. Temple sought in the concept of the sacramental universe "a clue to the general interpretation of the universe,"⁵⁹ and in this light he approached the whole problem of the relation of the eternal to history and of spirit to matter.

What, then, one might ask, is the relationship between this general incarnation and the one specific incarnation when the Word became flesh? Pittenger replies that Jesus Christ is *the* incarnation, the union of the human and divine life in a very special way. Is this a *unique* incarnation? In a sense, yes, Pittenger says, but basically because the difference in degree between

this incarnational union and that in other persons is so vast that it amounts to a difference in kind. However, we are urged to keep in mind that "that which is true of the *particular* incarnation with which we are concerned, is true also in an analogous manner of *all* God's work in his world."⁶⁰

The same line of thought is applied to the sacraments of the church, or to what Pittenger calls "the sacramental system of the body of Christ."⁶¹ The sacraments, too, we read, are in one sense—a very important and profound sense—"special instances or particular illustrations of a general sacramental principle which is natural to the whole created order."⁶² Just as the incarnation is considered the "crowning of the Creation,"⁶³ so also it can be said that the special sacraments of the church "crown and complete [the natural order] by its full and intentional infusion by, informing with, divine grace in a particularly and peculiarly intensive and distinctive fashion."⁶⁴

We remember the fundamental question underlying this whole study: How does redemption in Christ affect historical existence and renew it? Many Anglican scholars would advise us that we must go a long step back, because our question is really only a particular aspect of the more fundamental question: How is God related to the Creation, the infinite to the finite, the eternal to the temporal? Leonard Hodgson, for instance, can say that for him "the Christological problem is, as it were, a concentration of [the] problem of Creation."⁶⁵ Smedes states correctly that William Temple's Christology is a unique illustration of his cosmology.⁶⁶ These men also seek to develop a theology of history that encompasses *all things*. From the incarnation one looks back to the Creation, and in a sense one can start from the Creation and know something about the incarnation. Then, especially but not exclusively on the basis of the sacramental ministry of the church, one looks forward to the consummation of history, the recapitulation of all things in Christ.

The basic theme is worked out differently by different Anglican theologians. Some are fond of utilizing categories that have been derived from "process philosophies," especially the philosophy of organism as developed by Alfred North Whitehead. Frequently the emphasis on development and evolution strikes

one in this connection. Some Anglican scholars are inclined to understand the incarnation within the framework of some concept of emergent evolution, which for them, however, implies an immanence not of a naturalistic but of a revelatory nature. As in our previous section on Roman Catholic theologies of history, we shall pass by these detailed and complex questions. Our purpose is a limited one, namely to grasp a central perspective to be found in a certain tradition.

One other distinction between Anglican scholars must be mentioned in passing, however, because it relates back to our discussion in Chapter II and also to an earlier section of this chapter. Among the leading Anglo-Catholic scholars there are those who prefer to think in psychological categories rather than in ontological ones when it comes to the incarnation. We might mention Temple, Hodgson, and Pittenger, but there are others. This whole question comes to the fore, for instance, in their attitude toward the formula of Chalcedon and its concept of the hypostatic union of the two natures. Some find it impossible to think about the nature of a person in terms of substance anymore. These, they believe, are the categories of a bygone age, inadequate for the modern era. Hodgson suggests that we today must move on to our own Chalcedon, i.e., we must rephrase the essential truth of the traditional formula in modern categories.⁶⁷ Apparently the request to rethink Chalcedon is being voiced among various theological traditions. However, there are others for whom the ontological categories and their implied metaphysics remain precious and essential. E. L. Mascall, for instance, describes this preference for "the more fashionable science of psychology" and the reluctance to use ontological categories as a "failure of theological nerve."⁶⁸

However, when one moves away from an analysis of the person of Jesus Christ to the fundamental theme of Creation-incarnation-consummation, one will find a basic consensus among all these scholars—at least, one can speak of a substantial similarity in outlook. If one were to compare, for instance, the thought of E. L. Mascall, who at times sounds more Thomistic than the Thomists, and the thought of W. Norman Pittenger, who displays a much greater receptiveness for theological ideas from other

traditions, one would discover that despite all the differences between them they are in fundamental agreement on the question of a Christian philosophy of history.

"Christianity," Mascall states, "is a religion that generates a philosophy of history, and in this respect, with the Judaism of which it is the fulfillment, it stands out from all the other religions of the world."⁶⁹ What is the essence of this philosophy of history? It is the process of transfiguration, which in the end will lead to the glorification of the whole universe! The church is seen as, in essence, the human nature of Christ, which is communicated to man by adoption and incorporation, and as such it is regarded as the sole channel of grace to the world.⁷⁰ The effects of grace, however, go far beyond the bounds of the church; yes, says Mascall, "we may indeed see the effects of the incarnation in a gradual supernaturalization of the whole created order."⁷¹

Pittenger comes to speak of a philosophy of history in connection with a discussion on the cosmic sweep of God's activity.⁷² We are presented with a universal perspective. Pittenger affirms that "the world process is created and sustained by God, who intimately informs the whole and is expressed through it although in unequal measure and at different levels."⁷³ The more existential, and consequently less ontological, orientation of his theology comes out in the words that are added. "Historical events and human life," he continues, "which constitute the highest level of which we have direct cognizance, are the area where, as far as we can see, the eternal and temporal are in peculiarly intense interpenetration, varying in degree as the latter is made more effective as the instrument for the self-expression of God. Here is a Christian philosophy of history."⁷⁴ Indeed, and a philosophy of history that seeks to give a central although not exclusive place to man as the historical agent.

In other respects, too, one finds a certain ecumenical openness in the thinking of Pittenger. He has participated in ecumenical conversations, and he does not conceal the influence it has had on his thinking. We find the frank admission that under the influence of T. F. Torrance in ecumenical discussions, he has modified his previously published views concerning the church

as the extension of the incarnation.⁷⁵ He is worried about what has often happened to the concept of grace, how it "has suffered from an intolerable quantification and mechanization,"⁷⁶ so that it almost seems to be considered as a "something." He writes about "an almost demonic identification of Christ with the church as an existing, visible institution."⁷⁷ In such words many a Protestant must hear some of his own apprehensions expressed.

On the other hand, Pittenger is convinced that the usual Protestant eschatological theology must be supplemented by a theology that knows of a real presence of the future in this present time of grace.⁷⁸ On this point, he believes, the Catholic tradition can make a genuine contribution, while itself at the same time undergoing the influence of other traditions, for "we shall never reach anything like the full truth until both stories have been taken into account."⁷⁹ In our next chapter we shall see how some Protestant scholars seek to develop a pneumatology that will express "the real presence of the future in this present time of grace."

To the warnings uttered by Pittenger we ought to add one by the present Archbishop of Canterbury that will sound encouraging to many Protestants who are interested in ecumenical dialogue. In his aforementioned book he speaks about the cross and the atonement. The question obviously arises in the minds of many who do not adhere to an incarnational theology of the Catholic type, What, precisely, is the role and importance of the cross in the context of a Creation-incarnation-recapitulation structure? The emphasis on the atonement for sin, states Ramsey emphatically, may not be minimized. Of Illingworth he says that in the previously mentioned essay he expressed himself incautiously, for according to Dr. Ramsey, it is one's doctrine of atonement that will determine whether one accepts a true or false immanentism.⁸⁰ The Archbishop admits that there have been instances in Anglican theology in which the atonement was very far from the center,⁸¹ but, as he correctly points out, Temple, in the last years of his life, already came "to acknowledge with the courage of a rare intellectual humility the supersession of a theology of explanation by a theology of redemption."⁸² Toward

the end of his life, Temple showed a greater appreciation for the existential elements in theology than he had before.

Dr. Ramsey does not look upon his own tradition as a finished product. He well knows that the search for an "integrated theological structure" continues.⁸³ To the Anglo-Catholic theologian the word "integrated" definitely implies that redemption be conceived of as more than an existential reality. As we have seen, among some of their scholars there is a growing interest in the existential aspects of redemption, but never do they wish to divorce these from the realms of nature, history, and culture. Anglo-Catholics, in short, seek to develop a theology of the Word—not, however, in the sense of a kerygma theology, but in the sense of a Logos theology.

C. THE ORTHODOX-CATHOLIC TRADITION

We must not conclude this chapter without listening to a few representatives of the Orthodox tradition. A detailed discussion is unnecessary, for as far as the question in which we are mainly interested is concerned, it would prove to be repetitious. Stefan Zankov characterizes Orthodoxy in the following words: "During my whole study I have had the feeling that the Johannine idea of the incarnation of the Logos, or more exactly the unique union between God and man into what the Russians call a 'dual entity,' is the material principle of the essence of Orthodox Christianity, in faith as in life."⁸⁴ By now this idea has become familiar to us, and it can at once be recognized as a central perspective in all Catholic theology.

We must now listen a little longer to Zankov as he makes the observation that opinions differ widely in Orthodox theological writings as to the meaning of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and the aspect of atonement in the work of salvation. Says he, "Just what the meaning of the death of Christ in the work of salvation is, is a great point of controversy in modern Orthodox theology."⁸⁵ We have already taken note of the fact that the same is true among other communions of the Catholic tradition.

To a Protestant whose faith still consists of some fundamental convictions, such a remark sounds almost incredible. How can

this be? How can there be newness of life without forgiveness, he will ask, and how can there be forgiveness without atonement, and how can there be atonement without the sacrifice on the cross? From our preceding discussion it has become apparent that, in the two citations from Zankov's book, the former quotation explains the latter. Here too the starting point is taken in the incarnation, and more specifically the incarnation as *assumptio carnis*—the divinity appearing in the form of a human body. The counterpart of the doctrine of God's becoming man then becomes the doctrine of the "deification" of man through the reality of the hypostatic union in Christ. This union in Christ is seen as the historical foundation of the new world of redemption, which will lead to the transfiguration of the present world and the consummation of the marriage of heaven and earth. This is a truly Athanasian way of looking at things.

In Orthodox literature one can find terminology of a "realistic" and "substantialist" quality that outstrips that of most writers from the other communions in the Catholic tradition. True, this language must often be read with a certain poetic sensitivity, but nevertheless it strikes the average Protestant as coming from a world entirely different from his own religious experience.

We hear in Orthodoxy about a "perpetual incarnation," which is embodied in the church. Consequently, Bulgakov can state quite bluntly that "the church is the work of the incarnation itself."⁸⁶ Thus the reality of the hypostatic union of the divine and the human in Christ is continued and extended on earth. This is nothing less than heaven on earth, taking place in the Mystery. "It may be said," claims Bulgakov, "that the church was the eternal end and the foundation of Creation; in this sense it was created before all things, and for it the world was made."⁸⁷ Thus Christology, and the whole gospel of the Kingdom, has become ecclesiology.

The above structure can be arrived at only because pneumatology, too, is developed primarily (although not always exclusively) in terms of the church and her sacramental ministry. Pentecost, it is said, happens again and again in the heart of the church by virtue of the apostolic succession of the hierarchy.⁸⁸ Again the organic mode of thinking! Yet, ecclesiology has not completely

eliminated eschatology. There remains a future expectation, for reality is moving toward the process of sanctification. Says Bulgakov, "The glorified state, inherent in the body of the risen Christ, will be communicated to the whole creation."⁸⁹ The New Testament perspective of the ascension and Pentecost as inter-related events is virtually lost sight of. Here is one point where many existentialists and incarnationists seem to agree—that the ascension has no significant theological relevance.

Later we shall discuss theologies of history in which the preaching of the Word as prophetic witness to the whole world plays a central role. The course of the living and effectual Word through the world, creating new social and cultural forms, is then seen as a historical force of the first order. Therein, according to Protestant theology, lies the heart of the apostolate. The theme of apostolate and history, and the view that mission is the constitutive Christian event of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, we found mentioned in some Roman Catholic scholars too. Not so in Orthodoxy! The latter is basically a cultic religion. "The sermon is not essential," some of the Orthodox writers say.⁹⁰ In the cult and in the symbol the new reality itself takes place and permeates historical existence. It is all sacramental! Mission is therefore regarded as excessive activism. Someone has said that the true liturgy takes place in the street rather than in the sanctuary. Zankov, on the other hand, states that "the Orthodox cult is nothing noisy, it loves the inner chamber, the church, and avoids the street."⁹¹ Inner contemplation is the essence, and to many an Orthodox believer, mission savors too much of propaganda and superficial activism. The new world will not come automatically, but it will come sacramentally. To most Protestants these two notions have been brought too close together in Orthodox theology.

Christos Pantokrator! It is a triumphant confession! Orthodoxy is without a doubt a religion of the resurrection and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. But the manner in which he exercises his Lordship in these "last days" is conceived differently in Orthodoxy, and in the Catholic tradition generally, from the manner in which it is conceived in Protestantism. In the one case the mysteries are the primary realities that sanctify, transfigure, and

deify. In the other case the emphasis falls on the power of the Word and the Spirit.

I believe that Zankov is correct when he states that Orthodox theology maintains "an inward, intimate connection of the personal-dynamic and the cosmic-mystic."⁹² It combines a Christian existentialism and a Christian universalism. The following question may therefore arise: If a kerygma theology, in the sense of Bultmann and his followers, is unacceptable as a theology of history, is not the kind of Catholic theology which we have discussed in this chapter then the best alternative? Or is there a *tertium via*? This, it seems to me, is one of the crucial questions in contemporary theology.

Thus we have come to the end of a discussion of the Catholic tradition. Transformation, transfiguration, elevation, recapitulation, deification—these have been the basic categories with which we have been confronted in the preceding pages. They express a fundamental outlook on reality, on the origin and destiny of things. They represent Christian, yes, Christological, theologies of history. But the theologies of *Heilsgeschichte* and the theologies that find the genuine redemptive event in the encounter claim to be that too. We have spoken of ontological and historical categories. Are they as mutually exclusive as they are often portrayed to be? With this question contemporary theology is struggling. We heard the Archbishop of Canterbury say that the search for an integrated theology is still going on in Anglicanism. But not in Anglicanism alone. It is going on in the world church.

IV. WORD, HOLY SPIRIT, AND HISTORY:

in search of a via media

Indeed, one may develop with the help of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit an entire theological understanding which may be quite at variance with that of the last generation, which was rightly called a theology of the Word. . . . Our accent in the time immediately ahead must clearly be upon the Holy Spirit.

—Roger Hazelton, in *New Accents in Contemporary Theology*, pp. 84, 85.

A. REDEMPTION ACCORDING TO THE REFORMATION

The Reformation built its theology solidly on the theme of *sola fide, sola gratia*. Luther learned from personal experience that the only way to reconciliation and peace with God is through a total surrender to the grace of God. The reverse side of this coin reads *solī Deo gloria*. God is the first and the last; redemption finds its beginning and end in the initiative and the faithfulness of the sovereign and merciful God. He is the Lord! Man cannot save himself, and to the extent that the church is also a church of men, it cannot save. Only the church of Christ, the church subjected to its Lord, the church which knows that it, too, needs constant forgiveness and renewal, can become the instrument of salvation through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Thus the static structures of the sacramental system, as it was found in the medieval church, were broken through. Man was once again placed in the crisis of the confrontation with the

living God. What are the ultimate consequences of this theology of *sola fide*, *sola gratia*? We heard Bultmann claim that in his proposal to demythologize the New Testament he is making a radical application of the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone to the sphere of knowledge and thought. Man gives up all his outward securities, all his *facta credenda*, which tend to make faith the believing of a set of correct views. Every moment man is dependent on the encounter with Christ through the *kerygma*. Bultmann has no doubt that Reformation theology, when consistently worked out, must lead to a personalistic-existentialist theology.

In the preceding chapter we saw that Roman Catholic theologians have come to the same conclusion, although they would hasten to point out that this shows the basic weakness of the Reformation position of *sola fide*, *sola gratia*. In the name of faith, they would hold, grace is really abandoned. This breakthrough with respect to the static sacramental structure of the medieval church proves to be, according to these Roman Catholic scholars, a surrender of the essence and the reality of grace.

Then finally, both Bultmann and representatives of Rome are united in the view that a personalistic-existentialist theology is particularly the logical conclusion of the basic insights of the dialectical theology, which in turn is seen as the logical development of the basic insights of the Reformation. In the early days of the dialectical theology Bultmann already believed its significance to lie in the way it conceived of the historical nature of human existence, the so-called dialectics of existence.¹ We have noted before the estimate of some Roman Catholic scholars of the dialectical theology as essentially an existentialist spiritualism without historical and cosmic perspectives. In this chapter, therefore, we must first do two things: in this section we must take a look at the concept of redemption in the theology of the Reformation, and in the next section we must trace the background and some early developments of the dialectical theology. In both instances, as has been generally the case in this study, we shall limit ourselves to a brief and broad outline.

From the foregoing discussions it has become clear that the concept of redemption, as developed in the Reformation, is at

stake in the dispute. Is it true that the theological views that precipitated the Reformation and those which were eventually developed from it know only of a presence of redemption in *faith*, whereas they are oblivious to a presence of God in *grace*? In this connection we must remember that when the critics of the Reformation raise their objections, they are thinking of grace as more than the divine disposition by which we are forgiven; they mean grace in the sense of a new life power, a sanctifying reality that brings about a real change in the realm of *being*.

The accusation against the Reformers, then, is that they developed a theology of imputation without impartation. It is said that redemption thus conceived lacks reality in the ontological sense. Man, the sinner, is *declared* righteous; he experiences forgiveness; his outlook changes, but not his being. Mascall in this connection has spoken of a "legal" or a "logical fiction."² The source of the trouble is said to lie in the fact that the theologies of the Reformation were essentially and almost exclusively Word theologies, with personal faith as the primary corollary concept. To the extent that they were also theologies of the Holy Spirit, it is alleged, the work of the Spirit was interpreted primarily in terms of faith. To the extent that they were also theologies of the sacraments, we are told, these mysteries were generally spiritualized and thus robbed of their true significance.

The questionable nature of a characterization of the Reformation in such a neat and simple scheme becomes immediately apparent when one considers the fact that very soon the major bone of contention among the various groups of the Reformation became the question of the *praesentia realis Dei* in the sacrament of Holy Communion. While rejecting the medieval concept of grace and its resultant idea of transubstantiation—the conversion of the substance of the elements into the body and the blood of Christ—Luther and Calvin, as well as others among the principal Reformers, wanted to preserve the basic insight that was expressed in this concept, namely that Christ himself is present in and through the Sacrament.

It has been said that medieval theology constructed the doctrine of the sacraments, while Luther was the first one to frame a

doctrine of the Word of God.³ In a sense this is quite true, but it ought not to be implied thereby that Luther simply took over the Roman Catholic sacramental system. Then he would also have had to accept the medieval concept of grace, and this was obviously impossible. Luther wanted to be *more* sacramental than Rome, i.e., he wanted a theology in which there was more room for the emphasis on *Christus ipse*, the presence of the risen and living Christ himself.

Tillich has characterized both the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran positions, as "unhistorical sacramentalism."⁴ The term "consubstantiation," used in the early writings of Luther, and sometimes applied in subsequent Lutheran dogmatics, is an unfortunate one, since it tends to give the impression that Luther retained the distinction between accidents and substance, and that in this respect he still subscribed to a "substantialist" rather than an "existentialist" position. Luther certainly did not intend to present an unhistorical sacramentalism; his whole theology was inspired by a dynamic-historical concept of revelation. However, he also wanted a theology of "sacramental realism." Hence his emphasis on *est*, over against *significat*.

Luther, in other words, wanted to preserve the basic truth of the Roman Catholic position that the body and the blood of Christ are *realiter* and *essentialiter* present in the Sacrament. Hence his emphasis on the *Leiblichkeit* of the presence of Christ, and hence the repeated refrain in Lutheran confessions that the body and the blood are "truly and substantially" present in the Sacrament. As he was struggling with these questions, Luther formulated his views concerning the ubiquitous presence of Christ in the world within the background of the Christological doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*. In this same context we must also mention the question of the *manducatio oralis* and the related issue of the *manducatio impiorum*, the partaking of the body and the blood of Christ by those who are unworthy, a problem so prominently treated in Lutheran theology. In all these facts we have indications that Luther's theology, although strongly personalistic and existential in some respects, cannot be explained exclusively in those terms. Without accepting the Roman Catholic doctrine of grace, he wanted to proclaim a re-

demptive realism. As we shall see in a moment, Calvin wanted that too, although in a different way. The question is whether it can be done at all in the context of a theology of the Reformation, or whether such redemptive realism will always remain a foreign element—a residue of Roman theology.

Luther was not an abstract thinker, and “logical fictions” never had a very great appeal to him. He did, indeed, emphasize the concept of grace as *favor Dei* as well as the *fides Christi*, a faith whereby the believer enters into a personal communion with Jesus Christ. Regin Prenter has presented an extensive analysis of these concepts in Luther’s theology in his book *Spiritus Creator*. This work contains a study on Luther’s concept of the Holy Spirit. This fact is significant enough to be mentioned specifically here, for at several points in our discussion we have already stated that eventually and inevitably one will become involved in pneumatological questions as one considers this whole matter of redemption and historical existence. One’s pneumatology will prove to be decisive! After decades of preoccupation with Christological approaches, theology today is increasingly being compelled to face the pneumatological aspects of our fundamental theological problems.

In a section entitled “The Work of the Holy Spirit as Mediator of the Real Presence of Christ,”⁵ Prenter analyzes both Luther’s concept of *gratia* as *favor Dei* and that of *fides Christi* as *donum*—the gift. Faith, to Luther, is not an abstraction; it is a living relationship to a reality, and this reality is always Christ himself. “*Fides Christi*,” Prenter writes, “means to Luther life as a redeemed reality under and by the presence of Christ.”⁶ At the heart of redemption is the love and the mercy of God, grace as the *favor Dei*. This redemption becomes “ours” as *donum*, but not in the sense of a restoration of the *donum superadditum*. It becomes “ours” as *fides Christi*, as the new life in prayer and praise, but not “ours” in the scholastic sense of a *qualitas physica supernaturaliter infusa*, an infused reality that has an almost physical quality about it. Faith must remain faith, and its reality must always be the personal presence of the risen and living Christ. We have as those who do not have, because we have in the promise and the presence of Christ himself. This redemption

we never have at our disposal. "To the same extent that Christ is really present, faith is really present, and only to that extent," Prenter writes.⁷

We see a great emphasis here on the presence of redemption through the Holy Spirit. In a sense it is true that the theology of the Reformation in general can be called "a rediscovery of the locus on the Holy Spirit,"⁸ or even that before that time there was hardly any question of a developed doctrine of the Spirit.⁹ The position of the Holy Spirit in the divine nature was "established" in the Nicene Creed and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, but there remained great uncertainty and unclarity on the question of the *work* of the Holy Spirit, at least until the Reformation, when the concept of *inhabitatio Spiritus sancti* was much more fully developed. Luther's theology of the Word and the Spirit contributed greatly to this development.

Some of the fathers who dealt with this question were inclined to think in terms of the infusion of a spiritual substance. This led later to the medieval Scholastic concept of the *gratia interna et infusa*, a sanctifying grace that was dispersed by the church by means of the sacraments. Medieval theology had become so church-centered that there was a tendency to let ecclesiology usurp the place of pneumatology. This also led to the separation of the Word and the Spirit, for the Word was safely confined within the bounds of the authoritatively teaching church. "There is no place in the Roman Catholic system for a confrontation of the church with the Holy Spirit as Lord," complains a Reformed scholar yet today, "i.e., as witness to the Lordship of Christ over the church."¹⁰ This kind of sacramentalism was exploded during the Reformation by the rediscovery of the dynamic-historical nature of the work of the Spirit in the New Testament witness.

The Reformation took its starting point in the doctrine of justification, and the heart of its redemptive message became the reconciliation of the guilt of sin through the work of Christ, rather than a rehabilitation of nature by infused grace. In this sense the Reformation presented a Word theology over against a grace theology. Does this mean that such a theology is totally personalistic and existential? Prenter, as we have seen, entitled his book on Luther's concept of the Holy Spirit *Spiritus Creator*.

He briefly mentions the cosmic implications of the work of the Spirit, and concludes: "The Spirit is given the work of the sanctifying love of God to preserve and sustain his whole creation."¹¹ What would it mean to a theology of history if this perspective were fully worked out? Quite a bit, one suspects, but in Luther himself the main emphasis remained on the personal relationship to Jesus Christ.

On this point in particular some Reformed scholars express their reservations about the Lutheran tradition. They believe that Luther and later Lutheran theologians have paid too little attention to the historical, the sociopolitical, and the cultural implications of the redemptive presence of Christ the Lord through the Word and the Spirit. It is felt that the world of redemption and the world of the terrestrial realities were viewed in too antithetical a fashion, so that the *Gottesreich* was virtually confined to the inner recesses of the soul, while the sociopolitical and cultural realms were relegated to the *Weltreich* and the worldly order. The *dominium Christi* then becomes completely divorced from the dominions and power structures of the world. T. F. Torrance, for instance, who recognizes that Luther, in his doctrine of the new man, "distinctly thinks of the resurrection of the body as in some real sense begun in the believer,"¹² and that for him "faith is not simply pure encounter vis-à-vis the Word of God,"¹³ nevertheless holds that Luther "quite clearly . . . did not give sufficient attention to the corporeal embodiment of the Word here and now within the world."¹⁴ As is well known, some critics have defended the view that this theological outlook had ill prepared the Lutheran Church for its prophetic task in the modern world, especially in the critical days of the emergence of the totalitarian state and has thus had a most unfortunate impact on modern European history.

Torrance, in his study on the theology of the Reformation, finds a greater recognition of the embodiment of the Kingdom of Christ in the here and now in the theology of Martin Bucer, whom he discusses next. He, too, is a theologian of the Word and the Spirit, but wider pneumatological perspectives are opened in his thought. Bucer's concept of the *regnum Christi*, "by means of which [he] expresses very powerfully the idea that the eternal

Kingdom of God has entered into the midst of our life on earth, and overlaps this present age here and now,"¹⁵ is indeed very significant for a theology of history and culture. In his concept of the Christian community, Bucer sees the preaching of the Word, the prophetic proclamation, as having an important impact upon the affairs of the state. There is a preliminary and fragmentary embodiment of the redemptive reality in the historical, sociopolitical, and cultural statutes of existence. These are not in themselves the Kingdom of God, but rather they are signs of the hidden presence of the Kingdom of Christ and the work of his Spirit. "For Bucer," Torrance concludes, "the Kingdom of Christ in its relation to this world is not merely a *Hörreich* but also a *Sehreich* (to use Luther's terms), and it comes not simply *audiendo*, as Luther taught, but whenever by the power of the Spirit the Word is effectively translated into love and obedience, into life and action."¹⁶

This line of thought was further developed by John Calvin, and it forms the foundation of his theocratic outlook. Writing on the papal theocracy, Roland H. Bainton has remarked that "the ground on which it rested was the sacramental system."¹⁷ The work of grace as well as the affairs of government, the sacraments as well as the state, are all understood pneumatologically by Calvin, i.e., are understood from the perspective of the rule of the risen Christ who, as the ascended Lord, sends his Spirit. However, this must not be interpreted as a depreciation of the sacraments and a denial of the real and redemptive presence of Christ in and through them.

Let it be stressed from the outset that Calvin's view on the sacraments cannot be clarified at all by saying that he was cleverly seeking to bring about a compromise between the Lutheran literal and the Zwinglian figurative interpretations.¹⁸ This approach will prove to be singularly unproductive. We will probe much more deeply into his basic theological presuppositions when we consider Calvin's views concerning the significance of the ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. When Calvin develops his doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Book III of the *Institutes*, he spends much time discussing faith, repentance, and justification by faith. But he also comes to speak about

election! This opens up historical perspectives. In Lutheran dogmatics the central emphasis is generally more on personal redemption and faith, whereas in Reformed dogmatics the constitutive role of the decrees of God is often stressed.¹⁹ When Calvin speaks of the Holy Spirit as *effector*, he refers not only to the mystical union with Christ but also to the execution of the whole counsel of God!²⁰ Consequently, in Book IV of the *Institutes*, Calvin moves beyond a discussion of the church and the sacraments, and concludes his exposition with some considerations concerning the civil authorities. However, first we must return for a moment to the question of the *praesentia realis Dei* in the sacraments.

One can read the most contradictory statements about Calvin's views on the sacraments. On the one hand he has been accused of defending a pseudo-Zwinglian position that leaves no room for a real presence of Christ. On the other hand, it has been alleged that Calvin had not freed himself sufficiently from the medieval mode of thinking in metaphysical terms. Donald M. Baillie has spoken of "crude and unsatisfying ways" of defining the *realis praesentia* in Lutheran and Reformed theologies, and especially in Calvin.²¹ He seems to be closer to the truth than those who discover all kinds of spiritualizing tendencies in Calvin. The "crude" way of describing things was, as Baillie well recognizes, "an attempt to secure the utmost objectivity and reality for the presence of Christ."²²

Others have complained that, although Calvin does indeed stress the real presence of Christ, he fails to state explicitly that this means *corporeal* presence.²³ Many, also outside of the circles of the "sacramentalists," have felt that Calvin did not recognize sufficiently the fact that in the sacraments God honors the whole creation. God remains faithful to his world—to the earth and all things—and the sacraments, with their "material" aspects, point to the destiny of the creation in the new heaven and the new earth. In this connection we are often reminded by the critics that, after all, Calvin basically saw the sacraments as added to the Word because of human *weakness*.

The scheme Creation-incarnation (as the crown of Creation)-church-sacramental system, as we saw it developed in the Catho-

lic tradition, was indeed foreign to Calvin's thought. The basic reason for this is to be found in his views concerning the ascension. He speaks very realistically of the presence of the very body and blood of Christ, and our entire union with them. But he does so as one who is deeply cognizant of the reality and the meaning of the ascension.²⁴ As T. F. Torrance has correctly stated, "The crucial point for Calvin is a doctrine of the sacraments in the ascension and all that the ascension implies."²⁵ The ascension has created an "eschatological *distance*," which may never be ignored.²⁶ The notion apparently entertained for a moment by the Roman Catholic scholar E. Przywara that the reality of Christ's redemption in us is almost a reversal of the ascension²⁷ would never enter Calvin's mind, because in the Biblical view of the work of the Spirit he found the balance between the emphasis on the true presence of Christ in the present—the interim between the ascension and the Parousia—and the eschatological tension of the "not yet." We have the true presence of the whole Christ not *despite* the ascension but *because* of the ascension. He is present as the elevated Lord!

When we take our starting point in the incarnation and the hypostatic union between the divine and human natures, and we then see the church as the extension of the incarnation, with the sacramental system as the effectual channel of the new life, then we will almost inevitably concentrate our attention on what happens to the elements themselves in the sacraments. If, however, with Calvin, one sees everything in the incarnation move toward the ascension and the new presence through the Holy Spirit, one's sacramental theology will become historicized without becoming spiritualized. Calvin could not conceive of the body and the blood of Christ in and for themselves, because to him the true reality of the body and the blood of Christ lay in his *deed* of reconciliation.²⁸ Our communion with the body and the blood of Christ is then not our participation in the body and the blood as isolated substances, but it is communion in the new life, the redeemed life, which Christ as the ascended Lord bestows upon us through the Holy Spirit. Thus the whole Christ is present in the totality of his redeeming work: "*ut totus adsit non totum*" (Augustine).²⁹

The objection is sometimes raised that Christ promised us his body, and not only the Spirit. The answer is that these two cannot be separated. As Neville Clark has stated concisely: "The fact is not that Christ is identical with the Spirit, nor that he is replaced by the Spirit, but that he is present through the Spirit."³⁰ It is true that Reformed theologians have sometimes been inclined to let the heart of the matter stand for the whole matter, as they have put all the emphasis on the atonement and the forgiveness of sins. There are wider perspectives in the Sacrament, which has often been neglected. In the sacraments God does indeed "honor" the whole creation, but as *fallen* creation.³¹ He honors us with his presence in the world because he is faithful and because he is establishing his Kingdom.

The realism of this theology is a pneumatological-eschatological realism, rather than a realism of substance or of the ubiquitous presence of the body of Christ. The ascension has taken place, and so has Pentecost. The new presence is the presence of the interim, in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Donald M. Baillie, who is willing to adopt the idea of a "sacramental universe," is nevertheless mindful of the Biblical strictures on this point. He emphasizes that the Spirit is related to the incarnation, but then adds immediately that it is "also wholly bound up with the idea that the incarnation did not go on forever, but came to an end, and that since then the divine Presence is with us in a new way through the Holy Spirit working in the church through the Word and sacraments."³² This perspective has opened up new possibilities for a theology of history.

In summary, then, we find the following. While discussing the problem of redemption and the historical realities, we were faced with the question of whether the Reformation knew only of a Word and an abstract doctrine of faith which is directed at a "logical fiction." It can hardly be disputed on the basis of the records that the principal Reformers were always concerned with a redemptive realism in the Biblical and therefore dynamic-historical sense. Calvin, especially, sought to work out the cultural and the sociopolitical implications of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. It is extremely instructive to read in Torrance's study on the theology of the

Reformation the section on Calvin's view concerning the ascension of Christ,³³ the relationship between the presence in the present and in the eschatological future, the overlapping of the *regnum Christi* and the *regnum Dei*,³⁴ and finally the conclusion that "Calvin thinks of the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Christ as operating in history and on earth."³⁵ It is only recently that some of these ideas have once again come to the fore in present-day theologies of history. We shall return to them later, but first we must trace some developments that led to the emergence of the dialectical theology.

B. FROM KIERKEGAARD TO KARL BARTH AND OTHERS

What about the allegation that the contemporary existentialist theologies are in a real sense the logical outcome of the so-called dialectical theology? There is some truth to this charge. At any rate, as we hope to show in this section, some of the most striking insights that gave the early dialectical theology its sharp edge and its powerful thrust still play a very central role in Bultmann's theology, whereas the theologies of some of the other collaborators in this movement have undergone significant revisions. In a sense, then, Bultmann can be called the most consistent among the dialectical theologians!

In order to clarify this point we must backtrack our steps a little. In Chapter I, we sketched briefly how history had become a problem to modern thought in general and to theological thought in particular. Eventually the historical Jesus became an extremely problematical figure. Just as problematical became the concept of *Heilsgeschichte*, a history which is not, at least in principle, accessible to scientific objective historical research. We concluded that chapter with a discussion on the revival of the *heilsgeschichtliche* approach. Instead of calling attention at that point to the existentialist-eschatological developments that were taking place about the same time, we moved directly to the theology of Rudolf Bultmann *cum suis* as an example of the existentialist reaction against a theology of *Heilsgeschichte*.

At this point we want to fill in the picture a little more fully. Bultmann began his career as a member of that school of theo-

logical thought which became prominent in the 1920's, and which is variously designated as dialectical theology, neoorthodoxy, or theology of crisis. Many strands of thought influenced this powerful theological movement and contributed to it. For our purpose it will suffice to call attention to the emergence of the existential emphasis and the eschatological emphasis, as well as to the manner in which these two developments tended to become blended into one as the eschatological witness of Scripture became interpreted in terms of existential categories, thus leading to the peculiar concept of history which we discussed in Chapter II.

When we mention the emergence of existential thought in the nineteenth century, immediately the name of Søren Kierkegaard comes to mind. This profound and passionate Danish thinker wrote his voluminous works during the first half of the last century, but his great significance for theological thought was not perceived until several generations later. Kierkegaard has undoubtedly also exerted great influence upon the later developments of philosophical existentialism, although Fritz Buri might well be correct in his opinion that today Kierkegaard would probably react as vehemently against much that passes as existential philosophy as he did in his day against the philosophy of Hegel, because for him there was true understanding of human existence only *sub specie revelationis*.³⁶

Kierkegaard wrote his masterful works from the depth of his poetic and melancholy soul. In inwardness he found the true reality, not in the constructions of philosophical minds. Hegel he regarded as the philosophical system builder, as a "most extraordinary professor," but not as a thinker.³⁷ "The professor" was to Kierkegaard's mind the person who writes from the "objective" point of view, the man who does not seem to be passionately involved in the reality that he is expressing. Kierkegaard compared the builders of philosophical systems to those who build a huge palace and then proceed to dwell in an adjacent barn. In other words, they are people who do not themselves live in their beautiful systematic-philosophical constructions.

Hegel, Kierkegaard admitted, wrote magnificently about mind, thought, and the Absolute Idea, but he could not help

wondering what had happened to the *thinker*, the person who *exists*, struggles, suffers, and is called to *be* an individual in decision. In Idealism everything had been harmonized into an all-inclusive system; all contrasts had been reconciled; God, man, and the world had become links in the chain of the continuum of Spirit. Kierkegaard, like Friedrich Nietzsche, that other great rebel of the nineteenth century, was in revolt against the spirit of his age. He was a warrior against all systems, philosophical, scientific, or ecclesiastical, because he felt that in every one of them the ultimate seriousness and the primacy of human existence was ignored. Consequently, he tried to call man to himself, from the attitude of the spectator to subjectivity, in which alone the truth can be found.

Over against continuity Kierkegaard stressed crisis; over against the harmony of philosophical thought he set the contradictions of existence; over against the all-inclusive system that pretends to overarch the realms of the human and the divine, he posited the absolute and qualitative distinction between time and eternity, the dualism between God and man. Can this chasm be bridged? Yes, Kierkegaard held, because there is revelation, and there can be human response to that revelation. When that happens, eternity touches time.

We noticed earlier that some thinkers sought an escape from the perplexing problems of history and the relativity of historical knowledge in some form of immediacy or in the realm of the timeless rational. Lessing, as we saw, stated the issue concisely in his dictum that "accidental historical truths can never become proofs for necessary truths of reason." In short, historical truths cannot yield certainty. How, then, can a person be expected to make the "leap" from historical truths to religious truth? To Kierkegaard this kind of "leap" belonged to the essence of faith. As far as he was concerned, the historical problem of decrease in certainty, in proportion to the increase in time-distance, does not affect religious knowledge at all, and this for the simple reason that the contemporaries of Christ had no real advantage over the person who lives in a much later era. They, too, had to make the "leap"; they, too, could not see but had to believe that in this man Jesus, eternity had entered time.³⁸

The "object," then, of the Christian faith is the Absolute Paradox, the fact that in this particular man, in this particular place, at this particular moment in history, God became man. In Kierkegaard we once again find the emphasis on *the unique event*. Troeltsch, as we noticed previously, was acquainted with some of the writings of Kierkegaard, but this in no way affected his concept of the historical continuum in which Christianity is robbed of all uniqueness and is made one link among many in the chain of historical development. However, even before Troeltsch's death in 1923, the passionate protest of Kierkegaard was resounded in Karl Barth's commentary on Paul's letter to the Romans.

When man, through the witness of the gospel, is confronted with the Paradox, he is called to an individual decision, to the ultimate venture of faith. The historical cannot help one here, for faith is not based on that kind of certainty. One becomes "crucified to a paradox" and must then dare to live by the inner proof—the *argumentum Spiritus sancti*. But is not the gospel itself a historical witness? Kierkegaard believed that a minimum would suffice for faith, and that we certainly do not need a biography of a historical Jesus. As a matter of fact, if we only had been left the witness of Jesus' generation to their belief that in such and such a year God revealed himself in the humble form of a servant, that he had taught and lived in our midst and then had died, we would, Kierkegaard believed, have more than enough.

In Kierkegaard's concept of faith the believer has ceased to be man-the-spectator or man-the-manipulator. In the moment of decision—yes, the *Moment*—he has become an individual who is deeply and passionately involved. The true dialectic for Kierkegaard was the dialectic of existence, which is manifested in its "reduplication" in life. By this Kierkegaard meant in essence that one must *be* what one professes. This "reduplication" he found lacking in the church of his day. Christianity, for him, was not a doctrine, but a message about existence and a way of being.

The existential emphasis in Kierkegaard was accompanied by a believably critical attitude toward the historical. The historical

finds its significance not in the details of its factuality but in the fact that the unique event of the Christ becomes appropriated into my own existence through faith. In this spirit Kierkegaard approached the incarnation. This view raises questions concerning the presence of God in the midst of Israel and the coming of God to man today, and it leads inevitably to the broader issue of the relation of revelation and the historical realities. James Brown has summed up Kierkegaard's position on this point in the following words: "The logic of Kierkegaard's dialectic of faith requires only tangential contacts of eternity with time, both in the incarnation and in the recurrence of faith down through the centuries. History, as such, is in the end irrelevant: faith is an event outside time."³⁹

This aspect of Kierkegaard's thought has strongly influenced subsequent theological developments—perhaps, as Hermann Diem suggests, because Kierkegaard's own thought was in turn systematized and because it was forgotten that he meant to present a "corrective" to the theological thinking of his day, and that he presupposed the great historical doctrines of the church.⁴⁰ Later generations may have tried to derive from his thought what simply was not there: a systematic treatment. Kierkegaard wanted above all to help people find an answer to the question, "How can I become a Christian?" He chose the "edifying discourse" as his favored means to accomplish this end. This literary device, like the epigrams and aphorisms of Nietzsche, does not lend itself very well to simple schematizing and systematizing. Kierkegaard had no doubt that some day his person and his utterances would be understood, would acquire significance, and would find acceptance. He once wrote that he could just hear a professor in some university say, "The peculiar thing about this is that it cannot be taught."⁴¹ Perhaps it has been tried too much, despite this warning.

However this may be, it is a firm historical fact that after the "rediscovery" of Kierkegaard during the first quarter of this century there was a marked tendency to interpret his emphasis on the absolute and qualitative distinction between time and eternity in terms of a negative attitude toward the historical. Kierkegaard's positive contribution was that he saw clearly and

correctly that faith in the New Testament sense is in no way dependent on the positive or negative results of historical research. Faith is response to the Biblical witness concerning the God-man, an event in history which at the same time is more than history.

In 1892, before Kierkegaard's works had received widespread recognition and acclaim, Martin Kähler published an essay in which he contrasted "the so-called historical Jesus" with the "historic, Biblical Christ." This booklet received considerable attention at the time and evoked an extended debate among German theologians.⁴²

Kähler attacked the idea of the Bible as a collection of historical sources which could serve as the basis for a biographical study of Jesus or for a history of the primitive church. The "lives of Jesus," based on so-called objective historical research, in Kähler's judgment, actually were concealing from people the living Christ to whom the New Testament witnesses. They were developed as a reaction against the dogmatic Christ of a previous era, but according to Kähler they were based on equally dogmatic presuppositions.

In order to describe Christ's entrance into our history while yet retaining the mystery of the God-man, which made him more than a link in the historical continuum, Kähler introduced the term *übergeschichtlich*. The Biblical Christ, he maintained, is not unhistorical, but he is suprahistorical; his unique significance cannot be established by means of objective historical research but is grasped only in faith on the basis of the Scriptural witness.

Kähler sounds very contemporary indeed when we hear him say that "the real Christ is the preached Christ," he who in faith is proclaimed as Lord. This is the manner, said he, in which most people have met him—through the witness of the church, and not through the scholarly data of the experts. However, Kähler, more than Bultmann today, stressed both historical fact and eternal significance. The "retrospective question" (Althaus) was therefore not ignored; the Christ of faith was not severed from the Jesus of history, who in turn was not considered the same as the so-called historical Jesus of the *Leben-Jesu-Bewegung*.

In the title of Kähler's booklet we find the terms *historisch*

and *geschichtlich*. Today they are technical terms in the debate on demythologizing, which, as we have sought to show, is in essence a dispute concerning the nature of history, or, more precisely, which at heart deals with the question of the divine presence in history. Since these terms play such a prominent role in contemporary theological writings, we might briefly mention another booklet, written by G. Wobbermin in 1911, one year before Kähler's death. It is entitled *Geschichte und Historie in der Religionswissenschaft*. Here too the distinction occurs between the concepts of *Geschichte* and *Historie*, and once again we become aware that there has been a definite development that has led to the use of these terms in contemporary theology.

Wobbermin, who felt himself closely akin to Kähler, wished to apply the distinction between *Geschichte* and *Historie* more sharply and more consistently than had been done in the past. *Historie* to him is the kind of history which can be traced with the methods of historical research. Wobbermin regarded it as an important endeavor, but he held that in the nature of the case it could only produce probable truth.

Geschichte, according to Wobbermin, is not a study of the past, but rather it is a past that is still influencing the present, not merely as a deposit in historical tradition, but in a dynamic way. This is preeminently true of Christ. Religious conviction, Wobbermin insisted, is based not on historical judgments but on a dynamic relationship that has contemporized the past. At this point he put great emphasis on the resurrection, which becomes a present power in the moment of faith. He did not feel that the idea of contemplating on "the inner life of Jesus," which Wilhelm Hermann especially seemed to advocate, was an adequate expression for the dynamic religious reality with which we are dealing in the Bible and in religious experience. There is more than a moral impact of the image of Christ; there is a spiritual-creative happening, which takes place in the confrontation with the witness to the living Christ.

In conjunction with this development toward a *geschichtliche* rather than a historical interpretation of the Biblical witness and the existential outlook implied therein, we must see the emergence of the eschatological emphasis.⁴³ In 1889 Albrecht

Ritschl died. He had expounded the gospel of the Kingdom in predominantly this-worldly terms. His vision had been that of the Kingdom of God as the organization of humanity through action inspired by love. Christianity to him was the ethical religion par excellence. Consequently a great emphasis had been put on man and his moral initiative. Eventually the inevitable question could not be evaded. Is this kind of immanent, this-worldly, anthropocentric development the reality about which the Bible is talking? Must one not close one's eyes to whole dimensions in the Biblical witness in order to arrive at such a view?

Once this question was raised, it resulted in a complete change in theological orientation. Interestingly enough, the impetus toward this radical change was given by one from the circle of Ritschl's own family. In 1892, three years after Ritschl's death (the same year in which Kähler's study appeared), his son-in-law, Johannes Weiss, published a book on Jesus' preaching concerning the Kingdom of God.⁴⁴ In this book Weiss pointed out that there were major elements in Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom that had been largely neglected in recent theological studies, namely, the otherworldly emphasis, which was influenced by late-Jewish apocalyptic thought. Thus the transcendent and dualistic aspects of the gospel of the Kingdom were once again recognized. The eschatological perspective of the New Testament witness could not be made to fit into the scheme of progressive development through moral improvement. According to Weiss, the divine initiative and the crises of God's cataclysmic acts would have to be acknowledged as basic elements of Jesus' concept of the Kingdom.

At this point Albert Schweitzer took up the theme in his now classic study on *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. He further developed the insights of Weiss by pointing out that not only was Jesus' teaching marked by the expectation of the immanent breakthrough of the Kingdom, but his whole life as well. The significance he ascribes to the incident recorded in Matt. 10:23 as "the first significant date in the history of Christianity" and "the first postponement of the Parousia"⁴⁵ is well known. Ever since the appearance of Schweitzer's book, it has

become almost universally recognized that much of the nineteenth-century life-of-Jesus research was actually a reconstruction of Jesus in the image and cultural climate of that age.

Nevertheless, in basic views Schweitzer himself remained close to the nineteenth-century outlook, with its predominantly moralistic orientation. It is significant to note that it was not really he who gave the quest of the historical Jesus its death-blow; the subsequent emphasis on the *kerygma* did that. In Schweitzer's own portrayal Jesus appears as an apocalypticist who proved to be mistaken, and who will remain a stranger and enigma to our time. The conclusion he finally reached was that not Jesus as historically known but "Jesus as spiritually arisen within men" is significant for our time; not the historical Jesus but "the spirit which goes forth from him and in the spirits of men strives for new influence and rule is that which overcomes the world."⁴⁶ Schweitzer operates with a concept of the imitation of Christ that one finds difficult to criticize because it has such profoundly Christian qualities and because it has been so magnificently demonstrated in his own life of service. Nevertheless, the question must be asked whether, in the one-sided application it receives in Schweitzer's theology, it does full justice to the New Testament gospel of the Kingdom.

Others, who were not ready to eliminate the eschatological terminology of the New Testament as irrelevant for faith, but who were not able, either, to accept the futurist implications that had been traditionally drawn from them, were inclined to interpret eschatology in terms of existential categories. In short, it was claimed that the eschatological language, when correctly understood, intends to speak not about the end-time but about the transcendent reality and its appropriation through an existential encounter. It is asserted that eschatology refers not to the future but to the qualitative situation of all existence in time *sub specie aeternitatis*. Not the ultimacy of the end-time and the consummation of all things is intended, according to this view, but the ultimacy of the moment in which man confronts God. As Herman Ridderbos has stated, in this type of eschatology the time category is removed. The temporal indication of "post" is replaced by that of "trans."⁴⁷

We cannot trace more fully here the development from the *zeitgeschichtliche* view (with its distinction between the time-conditioned thought forms that allegedly form the husk that contains in a hidden way the kernel of eternal truth) via the *übergeschichtliche* view (with its emphasis, as in Kähler, on the events in history that are more than history), to the *ungeschichtliche* view (which sacrifices chronological time and puts all the emphasis on the transcendence of God and the crisis of the existential encounter). F. Holmström presented a detailed critical analysis of this development some decades ago. He referred to the 1920's, which produced outstanding Protestant theologies, as "a classic period of timeless speculation."⁴⁸

In this spiritual and intellectual climate the dialectical theology had its early beginnings. The emphasis on transcendence and the reluctance to relate redemption too closely to the world of historical realities are strongly reflected in the first writings that came out of this theological movement. This is the line that Bultmann is still continuing today. In our next section we shall seek to show that especially Barth, but also Brunner and others, later moved away from what they came to believe was a one-sided existentialism. Bultmann refuses to follow them on this course, and in this respect, as we have seen, he can be regarded as the most consistent among the dialectical theologians.

The dialectical theology was a reaction movement, and in its initial stages it had all the marks of passionate one-sidedness that usually characterizes such movements. This theology was born of a very profound and powerful revolt against historicism and psychologism. Of course, one cannot really treat such a movement as one unified theology, except by pointing to some common underlying presuppositions and perspectives. With great passion it was now pointed out that it is indeed preposterous for man to believe that he has access to the miracle of revelation by way of his historical research or that he could draw closer to God by merely turning within himself.

The otherness of God, who confronts man in the mystery of revelation, and the crisis involved in such a confrontation were now stressed. Once again it was declared with thundering clarion call that God is in heaven and man is upon the earth, and that

when man truly meets the Holy One, who is the Wholly Other One, his self-assertion is broken and his self-righteousness is shattered. Modern man was told that God is not found by man as the objective scholar and expert, but that man, as the penitent, is found by God. These things had to be said, and in many cases they were well said, although we can now look back and see how some of the chosen phrases lost in power as they gained in popularity.

Karl Barth and Emil Brunner in particular have taught the theological world to think and speak once more in terms of *Einmaligkeit*—the absolutely unique event that has taken place in Jesus Christ. Revelation, they declared, means that the wall of historicism has been breached. The divine revelation has broken into history; eternity has pierced the bubble of time. Thus a theology of transcendence challenged the current theology of immanence. Revelation is the great miracle, for it takes place despite the fact that *finitum non est capax infiniti*.

In the early pronouncements of the dialectical theologians we can clearly hear the echoes of Kierkegaard's works, whose message was later reinforced by the personalism to be found in the writings of Ferdinand Ebner and Martin Buber, with their distinction between the "I-thou" and the "I-it" dimensions of existence. Well known are the words of Karl Barth in the preface to the second edition of his commentary on Romans: "If I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called the 'infinite qualitative distinction' between time and eternity, and to my regarding this as possessing negative as well as positive significance."⁴⁹

In those days "eschatology" became a key word. "If Christianity be not altogether restless eschatology," proclaimed Barth, "there remains in it no relationship whatever with Christ."⁵⁰ However, it must be kept in mind that the concept of eschatology had by and large been severed from the idea of a historical future, for existentialism had swallowed up eschatology. History is portrayed as the world of man, the world of flesh in the pregnant Biblical sense of that word. History is "this present age"; it is the realm of the transitory and the rebellious. God's world never becomes part of this world, at least it does not really

find extension in history so that it could become accessible to us through our means of investigation or historical research.

It was strongly implied in those days that history signified not only finiteness and transitoriness but *judgment*. After World War I there was little left of the belief in historical progress which had been so predominant during the past century. Now the question arose whether redemption has really anything to do with history in the usual sense. Does not salvation actually mean that one enters into a new world—the world of God's grace? Is it not true that in the "Moment" of the divine-human encounter one is, in faith, lifted above the world of the transitory and the contingent and placed into the very presence of God? Said Karl Barth once, "The judgment of God is the end of history, not the beginning of a new, a second, epoch. By it history is not prolonged, but done away with. The difference between that which lies beyond the judgment and that which lies on this side of it is not relative but absolute: the two are separated absolutely."⁵¹

Thus are expressed the sharp either-or distinctions of a youthful protest theology, which launched its merciless attack upon the notion that revelation can be treated within the context of a general concept of history, and which consequently tended to eliminate the idea of uniqueness. With Kierkegaard it was maintained that revelation involves crisis rather than historical continuum; the "facts" of revelation are facts in the dimension of faith. But Berkouwer is quite correct when he points out that in essence this was not a negative protest theology, and when he interprets Barth's theology as being, from its very inception, a theology of "the triumph of grace."⁵² The redemption which this grace produces, however, was at first conceived of as a reality that could never become a matter of history, and thus it seemed to be regarded as an unhistorical happening.

In the light of the preceding remarks it will surprise no one to find that the term "*Heilsgeschichte*" was quite suspect in those days. Wrote Karl Barth in his book on Romans, "What is called the 'history of our salvation' (*Heilsgeschichte*) is not an event in the midst of other events, but it is nothing less than the *Krisis* of all history."⁵³ Brunner, too, wished to avoid this concept, be-

cause, as he once explained in a footnote, "it does not take into account that this 'history' is not historically tangible, is not extended historically in time, but that it constitutes the invisible element in this definite historical element."⁵⁴ At that time Brunner felt more inclined toward the term "eschatological event," a phrase Bultmann now uses so much in his own peculiar way, or toward the term "superhistory."⁵⁵ More recently, Brunner has been quite willing to confess "with shame and astonishment" that, despite the fact that "eschatology" was such a key word in those early days of the dialectical theology, actually very little was contributed toward a Biblical eschatology.⁵⁶

Those who seek to establish a direct and inevitable connection between the dialectical theology and the kerygma theology of Bultmann *cum suis* will find their choicest quotes in the literature of the 1920's. At that time it was quite customary to posit a dichotomy between revelation and history. We have become familiar by now with the concept of revelation which underlies this outlook. Revelation is viewed in terms of an existential encounter and a radical reorientation of man's self-understanding. Eternity is described as breaking into time like a flash of lightning. The "Moment," not the chronological course of time, is regarded as the theologically significant time. God strikes down perpendicularly, as the vertical line that crosses the horizontal line.

Christology, too, was treated in terms of the so-called "vertical miracle." Right from the start, in his interpretation of the opening verses of Paul's letter to the Romans, Barth described the coming of Christ the Lord as the point on the line of intersection where God's world of redemption and the world of human history meet and go apart. "The effulgence, or, rather, the crater, made at the point on the line of intersection makes itself known in the life of Jesus—that other world which touches our world in him. Insofar as our world is touched in Jesus by the other world, it ceases to be capable of direct observation as history, time, or thing."⁵⁷ Here is an illustration of a choice quote.

It was emphasized at that time that redemption "touches" historical reality as the tangent of a circle. This dynamic-

personalistic view of revelation is what H. R. Mackintosh has characterized as Barth's "excessive actualism," to which even the most sympathetic student finds it difficult to give assent.⁵⁸ Brunner applied the same language when he wrote: "Historical actuality is the way in which the Eternal Divine Word, as the Eternal Son, touches the historical world. This actuality means a real entrance into the historical mode of existence, but so far as its significance is concerned this entrance merely touches the fringe of existence."⁵⁹ In other words, the revelation as such possesses no historical extension—it is the "End of history."⁶⁰

Few would deny today that these men were calling the church to a very important Biblical insight, namely, that the Christ in history cannot, as to his true significance, be known by means of objective historical investigation, but only in faith, which in turn implies personal decision and commitment. The question which many would raise is whether we are not presented here with a "theology of the Word" which conceives of revelation exclusively as an existential encounter. Some, especially in Roman Catholic circles, say that no other fruit can be produced from the original tree of the dialectical theology. However, an actual study of the literature seems to suggest that no such organic and inevitable developments are inherent in the dialectical theology. Revisions have been made without sacrificing the major insights gained during the first quarter of this century. We now want to look at some of these developments, especially in the works of Barth and Brunner.

C. SOME SECOND DIALECTICAL THOUGHTS

"Barth's greatness," according to Paul Tillich, "is that he corrects himself again and again in the light of the 'situation' and that he strenuously tries not to become his own follower."⁶¹ One has only to read the prefaces to the various editions of Barth's commentary on Romans to notice that he recognized already in the 1920's that many things would have to be said differently and that other themes and perspectives would have to be incorporated. During the next decades one finds a growing tendency toward self-criticism in Barth's voluminous works. Via the

concept of *Urgeschichte* (which was utilized in the *Christliche Dogmatik*, but which was abandoned when, after one volume had been completed, Barth started afresh with the *Kirchliche Dogmatik*), he has come to an increasing use of the concept of *Heilsgeschichte*.

In his essay "The Humanity of God," Barth speaks very frankly about the revisions that had become necessary in his own terminology and approach. "What expressions we used," he states there, "—in part taken over and in part newly invented! —above all, the famous 'wholly other' breaking in upon us 'perpendicularly from above,' the not less famous 'infinite qualitative distinction' between God and man, the vacuum, the mathematical point, and the tangent in which alone they must meet."⁶² Long before this, however, Barth was obviously rethinking his approach to history. "If we say Jesus Christ," he wrote in 1938, "we also assert a human and therefore temporal presence. . . . 'The Word became flesh' also means 'the Word became time.' The reality of the revelation of Jesus Christ is also what we call the lifetime of a man. It is also a section of what we call 'historical time,' or world history and its prehistorical time."⁶³ Not *only* that, but *also* that! In this same context one finds a critique on certain passages in the book on Romans.

"Without God's complete temporality," Barth wrote a few years later yet, "the context of the Christian message has no shape."⁶⁴ In this connection he is eager to point out that as we use this concept of God's "temporality," we must at the same time speak of his pretemporality, his supratemporality, and his posttemporality, because otherwise we would not be speaking about the eternal God of the Bible! However, it is also made clear in that particular discussion that the concept of the "supratemporal" may definitely not receive the connotation of "timeless."⁶⁵

In the third volume of his great work on dogmatics, Barth writes very positively about *Heilsgeschichte* as the history of the covenant of grace. "This history," we now read, "is from the theological standpoint *the* history."⁶⁶ By this time Barth has come to believe that the term "history of salvation," as it had been used so prominently by certain conservative theologians

during the nineteenth century in order to distinguish this history from world history, national history, the history of civilization, and even church history, is materially correct and important.⁶⁷ However, it must not be seen as one history among others as if they were all of one kind. No, all other history must be read and interpreted in the light of *Heilsgeschichte*! In Barth's own words, "The history of salvation is *the* history, the true history which encloses all other history and to which in some way all other history belongs to the extent that it reflects and illustrates the history of salvation; to the extent that it accompanies it with signs and intimations and imitations and examples and object lessons."⁶⁸ In short, one who does not know about the covenant of grace—God's saving dealings with the world—does not know the inner truth about world history.

Needless to say, these revisions in no way represent a return to historicism. Barth is quite emphatic on this. The history about which we are speaking is sometimes, and then to some extent, accessible to us with the means of historical research—but not as to its inner truth: the presence of the living God. Barth would hold that in a sense and to a degree, this is true of all history, since no history is ultimately independent from God. It is particularly true, however, at the points of the revelatory events (e.g., the miracles, and especially the central miracle: the resurrection), because in these cases the "nonhistorical" element, from the historicist's point of view, is the greatest.

Thus Barth has come to accept the idea of a "nonhistorical history," i.e., events that truly have occurred in world-historical time, but that nevertheless are beyond the scope of empirical research. The manner in which the Bible witnesses to these events is, in the nature of the case, not the way of modern historiography, but, says Barth, it is ridiculous to consider this non-historical presentation of history as inferior, or untrustworthy, or even rejectionable.⁶⁹ This is essentially the argument Barth has used against Bultmann, when he insists that events can be historically real even when in the final analysis they cannot be traced by means of objective historical research.⁷⁰ We have already noticed Bultmann's rejection of this notion.

In the various parts of the fourth volume of the *Church*

Dogmatics we find a continued emphasis on the intimate relationship between *Heilsgeschichte* and world history. In the preface to the section IV-2, dealing with the doctrine of sanctification, or, as Barth expresses it, the consequences for mankind of the exaltation of Christ as the true man, he states that the content of that book might be regarded as an attempted evangelical answer to the Marian dogma of Romanism—both old and new.⁷¹ The question of sanctification has been a central concern throughout our study. Through the above terminology and its development in this work Barth seeks to show that from a Christological perspective the truth of sanctification can be presented fully without the Roman Catholic concepts of infused grace and human cooperation. As one reads this volume one senses that Barth is engaged in constant polemics even when the parties are not specifically mentioned. On the one hand he defines his position over against Roman Catholic theology, while on the other hand he is engaged in a running debate with Bultmann and the existentialist theologians. A way is sought between existentialism and Roman Catholicism.

It is evident that one cannot fully deal with these issues purely within the confines of Christology; pneumatological questions arise inevitably. We shall turn to that aspect of the question in a moment. For the present we observe that Barth states unequivocally that what has taken place in the coming and the presence of Jesus Christ "takes place in the sequence of [God's] whole action, in the context of all his works, as one event among others in the history of Israel and therefore in world history."⁷² Yet, as the miracle of the God-man, this event is *sui generis*, distinct from all other events. We could compile quotation upon quotation in order to show that Karl Barth has indeed come to an increasingly positive evaluation of world history and its theological significance.

The same can be said of Emil Brunner. Just as Barth has warned us against certain expressions in his *Epistle to the Romans*, so Brunner has affirmed his peccavi with respect to the limited interest he had shown in the Jesus of history in his book *The Mediator*.⁷³ More recently Brunner has become inclined to hold on to the concept of *Heilsgeschichte*, i.e., the dependence

of faith on the historical event of Jesus Christ, and he now rejects the concept of a "metahistory" (*Übergeschichte*), which is divorced from chronological time and emptied of cosmological connotations. "For so long as faith is centered in Jesus Christ," he writes, "its object is a happening which belongs integrally to history too in the sense of chronology, and so to cosmology, even though it is perfectly true that the pronouncement of faith about this Jesus Christ is no object of secular knowledge but of faith alone."⁷⁴

Brunner deliberately presents his theology as a kind of *via media* between Barth's "objectivism" and Bultmann's "subjectivism."⁷⁵ In the writings of Barth, Brunner holds, the appropriation of salvation in the act of faith has never received adequate treatment. Now a strong reaction has set in, especially in the theology of Bultmann. The latter, however, neglects the historical nature of revelation, and this in turn leads to a reduction of the *kerygma*, especially in that no justice is done to the Biblical witness concerning the Kingdom of God.⁷⁶ Brunner's reference to the *Kingdom* is significant!

An interesting term occurs in the last volume of Brunner's *Dogmatics*, namely, "*heilsgeschichtlich-existentiellen Soteriologie*,"⁷⁷ viz., a soteriology that avoids the pitfalls both of an unhistorical existentialism and of a speculative ontology. This term in itself is a clear indication of how Brunner is struggling to hold on to both the historical and the existential perspectives. The strong "personalism" in Brunner's theology is still very evident in this final volume of the *Dogmatics*. His doctrine of the church is emphatically antisacramental and anti-institutional. The origin of the Roman Catholic Church and of many of the evils that Brunner believes beset the church today, are, according to him, to be found in two sources: (1) the sacramental understanding of salvation, and (2) the emergence of the institutional church with its formal-judicial concept of authority.⁷⁸

Some might object to the implication that Brunner's theology is excessively personalistic by pointing out that his later works contain specific references to the cosmic significance of the saving work of Christ.⁷⁹ This is true, and it is an important point that must be kept in mind. The Dutch scholar G. C. van Niftrik

might well be right when he suspects that Brunner has reached a position that is closer to Bultmann than to Barth,⁸⁰ but we must not overstate our case. Van Niftrik quotes a sentence from Brunner's *Dogmatics*, III, where the latter states that the cross of Golgotha is indeed a once-for-all event in the sense of the historian, but that, when in faith it is apprehended as God's deed of reconciliation, it becomes "the absolute historical event."⁸¹ Does Brunner mean to imply that faith has "creative power," as if faith "made" the event of the cross redemptive? In view of the rest of the book this seems highly doubtful. The objective reality of redemption in Christ seems to be emphasized in the fact that it is described as the promise of the new mankind and the cosmos. However, then in turn it must be kept in mind that this is confessed from the *eschatological perspective*. In other words, eschatologically speaking, we must go beyond the personalistic view and gain a cosmic vision.

Brunner now speaks of a "cosmic expansion" of the *kerygma*—the gospel of forgiveness.⁸² "In Jesus Christ," he affirms, "we own both the ground and the goal of creation, the God who is both the whence of my life and the life of the world, and also the whither of my life and the life of the world."⁸³ In this eschatological vision the redemption which is in Christ is described as having world-historical and cosmic dimensions. The same emphasis can be found in Karl Barth. He, too, sees the saving occurrence and reality in Jesus Christ as "certainly the event which is the goal ascribed and ordained for the created cosmos in the primal divine decision in which it has its origin."⁸⁴

Once more we come to the crucial question: What about the interim, the time between the ascension and the Parousia, the here and now? Is there any way in which this world-historical and cosmic redemptive reality is reflected or embodied in the present? As we have seen before, this question always leads one into pneumatology and all the problems which throughout the history of Christian theology have been connected with this doctrine. Brunner is well aware of this when he correctly states that "the theme of the Holy Spirit has always been an awkward one for the church in its formation of dogma."⁸⁵ We saw already how the scope of the Biblical teaching on the Spirit is limited

in Bultmann's theology to the new self-understanding. We have also considered briefly how the Catholic tradition tends to develop the pneumatology as an extension of the hypostatic union of the human and divine natures in Christ through the church and the sacramental ministry.

Do Barth and Brunner have any insights to offer which might lead us beyond the above alternative? As early as 1930 R. Birch Hoyle wrote in his book *The Teaching of Karl Barth*: "If there is one aspect which Barth could develop with gain to the whole of Christianity, it is this neglected doctrine of the Holy Spirit."⁸⁶ Many times after this the same refrain was taken up by others. Well, in their more recent works both Barth and Brunner have devoted considerable attention to this aspect of the Christian faith.

The third main section of Brunner's *Dogmatics* is entitled, "God's Self-Communication as His Self-representation Through the Holy Spirit."⁸⁷ This section first discusses the doctrine of the church and then develops the theme of the new life we have through Christ. The emphasis on faith, as evoked by the witness of Scripture, is predominant in this whole work. The new life in Christ is the life in faith, hope, and love. It is quite significant to observe that the Holy Spirit is called primarily a "speaking Spirit," the voice of God which affects our inner being, assuring us of our acceptance as his children and calling us to service.⁸⁸

Is the "speaking Spirit" the plenitude of the divine presence in the dispensation between the ascension and the Parousia? Brunner realizes that more must be said on this matter, and he proceeds to describe the Holy Spirit as "creative power," which issues into new life, a new will, new feelings, yes, even new physical strength.⁸⁹ In the brief chapter on sanctification (over against nine chapters on faith) Brunner recognizes that there are also visible signs, or fruits, of the work of the Spirit in various services.

According to Brunner, the church as the fellowship of the true believers (the *communio* of the *sancti*, not the *sancta*!) is, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, the present reality of the future.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the new inspiration does not remain confined

within the framework of the ecclesia; there is an effect on the world. Something of the new life of the church "streams forth into the world and becomes a new leaven which leaveneth the whole lump."⁹¹ But even here Brunner is eager to stress the inner motive as being more important than the outward, visible effect.⁹² In other words, redemption is basically seen as an inward transformation, although there is an influence from the church on the world and its sociopolitical and cultural life.⁹³

We have already spoken about the centrality in Barth's thought of the history of Jesus Christ, the mystery of the God-man, but nevertheless the history that has taken place in our history. This history Barth sees as the historical execution of the divine decree, the eternal purpose and resolve of God for mankind and the world.⁹⁴ In other words, from all eternity God desires to be Immanuel, God with men.

This history has really happened, but—we must now add—it is not past. This history of salvation can still become our history of salvation. The exaltation of the Son of Man, the One in whom our human essence has become conjoined with the divine essence, has its consequences for all mankind and for the whole world. Jesus Christ, Barth writes, is "the act of God in which the Son of God becomes identical with the man Jesus of Nazareth, and therefore unites human essence with his divine essence, and therefore exalts the human into fellowship with the divine; the act of God in which he humbles himself to exalt man. . . . As it takes place, there takes place the reconciliation of the world with God. . . . It is the justification of man, his sanctification, and his calling to the Kingdom of God. It is the being of the church in the world. . . . It has happened. But insofar as it has happened as this history, the act of God, it has not ceased to be history and therefore to happen. . . . 'Jesus Christ lives' means that this history takes place today in the same way as did that yesterday—indeed, as the same history. Jesus Christ speaks and acts and rules—it all means that this history is present."⁹⁵

Thus Barth stresses, not the continuance of the "significance" of Christ, nor a continuation of the incarnation as the hypostatic union of the two natures, but the rule of Christ as the resur-

rected and ascended Lord. In the resurrection and ascension Christ is not, as it were, completed, but the redemptive reality is *revealed* to man. The resurrection and the ascension, which are basically seen as one occurrence, are in their unity the event of Christ's self-declaration.⁹⁶

More specifically now, how does this history become our history? The answer is that this happens through the work of the Holy Spirit. Says Barth, "The power whose operation is presupposed in the New Testament is the outgoing and receiving and presence and action of the Holy Spirit."⁹⁷ And thus is materialized in our midst the presence and action of Jesus Christ himself—he himself in the power of his resurrection.⁹⁸ In the work of the Holy Spirit we have a kind of "central history," which in faith is recognized as the true world history. Hence the statement of Peter that at the time of Pentecost the Spirit was poured out on all flesh.⁹⁹

De jure, Barth holds, all mankind has been reconciled in Christ; *de facto* many do not acknowledge him. In this situation the church is built up and equipped by the Spirit for its ministry. "The Holy Spirit is the power by which Jesus Christ fits his community 'to give a provisional representation of the sanctification of all humanity and human life as it takes place in him.'"¹⁰⁰ It is emphasized that the life of the church is not an end in itself. It must perform its ministry in witness to the sanctification which *de jure* has taken place for all mankind; it is the fellowship of believers who know the sanctification *de facto*. Thus the church is the fellowship of the interim. "Christianity, or Christendom, is the holy community of the intervening period."¹⁰¹

Lately the interim between the ascension and the Parousia has gained importance in Barth's theology, and the last word on this question is clearly: the Holy Spirit.¹⁰² But man also has an important role to play! The meaning of the time between the resurrection-ascension and the Parousia is that the history of Jesus Christ is still going on. Jesus Christ is still struggling with the forces of darkness. And man is given space and time to participate!¹⁰³ Thus, says Barth, God "respects" our humanity;

the interim is the opportunity for service in Christian freedom. The Spirit creates history, and the apostolate of the church becomes *the* historical force of the interim.

Thus the future is present. It is the presence of the living Lord in the power of his resurrection through the Holy Spirit. By this presence, world history is qualified. No longer, as in the earlier days of the dialectical theology, is history seen in terms of "the strange patience of God." History is now viewed very positively as the dispensation of the Spirit and the time for participation in the redemptive work of God with his world, until there shall be the new heaven and the new earth.

In the light of all this, it should not be too much to ask that a moratorium be declared on all facile talk about the so-called flight from history on the part of "neoorthodoxy." The dialectical theology never really was a unified "movement," and today more than ever each scholar must be read carefully and be respected as to the developments in his thought as he struggles with profound and perplexing issues.

At this point we must call to mind briefly the background of the preceding inquiry. Twice we have been confronted with an either-or. The first time was in the existentialist reaction against *heilsgeschichtliche* theologies. At that time we were told that the alternative is either an existentialist-kerygmatic theology, with its emphasis on redemption exclusively in terms of a new self-understanding, or a theology that will lead inevitably to an objectification of God, a distortion of the Biblical concept of faith, and a magical-physical concept of redemption. Then, in the next section, we were confronted with the alternative of either a theology that knows only of a faith relationship and of salvation as a "logical fiction," or a theology that incorporates the idea of a reality-revelation, i.e., that recognizes a real change of being in the here and now. In short, the issue is portrayed as a conflict between a historical-existential or a metaphysical-substantial view. *Tertium non datur*.

In the section on the theology of the Reformation with which we opened this chapter, we tried to show that the Reformers pointed to a possible third way. We noticed that they did indeed

formulate a theology of the Word with (especially in Luther) highly personalistic overtones, but that this was a theology of *the Word and the Spirit*, with (especially in Calvin) a strong emphasis on sanctification, with its personal but also its socio-political and cultural aspects. The terminology was generally less metaphysical and more historical compared with Catholic theologies. However, we have also observed in the course of this study that a number of prominent Catholic scholars today admit that the dynamic-historical categories of the Bible did not always receive full justice in the more static-metaphysical terminology used by Aquinas and in subsequent theologies based on his work.

It must be admitted that during the post-Reformation period much confusion continued to prevail concerning the *operatio Spiritus sancti* and that little constructive work was done to draw out further implications of the pneumatology for a theology of history and culture. During the seventeenth century we find much preoccupation with, and considerable speculation on the question of, the so-called *ordo salutis*; we find long disputes on the relationship of justification and sanctification, as well as on the various views of regeneration in the "broad" and the "narrow" sense. In some instances the idea of some sort of "physical" process is reintroduced or at least suggested by the terminology used. In some cases there was a tendency, as eventually in Pietism, to switch the emphasis from the objective to the subjective aspects of the redemptive work of Christ. This has led to the well-known remark that the sons of the Pietists were the Rationalists. Repeatedly, disputes have arisen within Reformation theology concerning imputation or impartation. The idea of *infused* righteousness besides or in addition to *imputed* righteousness was accepted by some because they believed that without it one could not have a true doctrine of sanctification, and was rejected by others because they believed that it threatened the doctrine of justification as *justificatio impii*. Never may man, not even pious man or the man with the spiritual gift, come in the place of God and his sovereign grace.

In the early days of the dialectical theology it had become necessary to reaffirm with passionate emphasis that the Bible speaks first and foremost about God and not about man, no

matter how moral the man. It was also pointed out with equal passion that turning to history or turning within oneself would not lead one to a true knowledge of God, but that to listening man he would reveal himself through the Word. However, we hope to have had some success in showing that an extreme theology of the Word is neither inherent in the theology of the Reformation, nor in the so-called dialectical theology. In view of actual theological developments it becomes hard to maintain that Bultmann's theology is ultimately the only logical development for Protestant thought.

What we see, especially in the recent works of Karl Barth, is a great emphasis on the theological significance of the ascension and the new presence through the Holy Spirit, not as a kind of extension of the incarnation, but as the rule of the risen Lord. Thus an attempt is made to apply pneumatological insights to the question of history and the meaning of the time between the ascension and the Parousia. Theology is still eschatological through and through, but not exclusively so. The presence of the future through the Spirit does not reduce or diminish the eschatological perspective, but rather reinforces it, for all the works of the Spirit point to the new world of the Kingdom of God.

Others, in their own way, have tried to move in the same direction, as they have sought to develop a theology that would incorporate the historical and cosmic perspectives of the Bible as well as the personalistic and existential ones, while avoiding the one-sidedness of an exclusively existential Word theology, as well as the problems of a metaphysical grace theology. We mention in particular the "theology of fulfillment" that has been delineated in the works of the Dutch scholar A. A. van Ruler. We include a section on his theology in this study, because he has contributed significant and sometimes original insights to the questions that concern us in this inquiry. In passing we shall have opportunity to mention the work of some other Dutch scholars, thus broadening the scope of our survey by including a realm of theological endeavors which, mainly because of the language factor, has remained terra incognita, especially for those in the English-speaking world.

D. THE IDEA OF A "THEOLOGY OF FULFILLMENT"

In this section we shall be principally concerned with Van Ruler's major dogmatic work entitled *De Vervulling van de Wet* (The Fulfillment of the Law).¹⁰⁴ The subtitle of this book is: "A Dogmatic Study Concerning the Relation of Revelation and Existence." The word "existence" here means something very different from the content it has received in the writings of the existentialist theologians. One could say that it refers to reality in general, but then a Christian-theological view of reality. Existence, in Van Ruler's thinking, is *created* reality, and that implies, according to him, that it must not be viewed from the point of view of its *essence*, its being-in-itself or its *ontos*, but from the perspective of God's creative activity. Van Ruler is reluctant to speak too ontologically about things. As created reality all things *exist*; they are posited, as it were, through the creative Word of the God whose Word is always deed. Things do not rest in themselves; they find their being in the divine creative activity.

God is doing something with the world. He is establishing his Kingdom. In Van Ruler's theology, revelation, as God's creative and saving activity in and with the world, is portrayed in its cosmic and historical dimensions. The above-mentioned study has as its central theme and interest the role and the function of the law in the historical and eschatological dealings of God with the world. What, especially, does it mean that the law has been fulfilled? However, in the course of the book the basic outlines of a "theology of fulfillment" in a much broader sense are indicated. The Bible speaks of a number of other realities as being fulfilled. The idea of *pleroma* is used in many different contexts in the New Testament, and the manner in which this is done, Van Ruler believes, is very significant for a theology of history and culture.

We shall now present a brief characterization of Van Ruler's theology. In a sense this undertaking is more hazardous than in the case of some of the other theologians whom we have been concerned with. Most of the latter are quite well known,

and there is a rather wide acquaintance with the basic concepts and structures of their thinking. Consequently, one can assume a certain familiarity with their ideas among one's readers and one can therefore take more for granted. However, this brief sketch will still serve its purpose if it is kept in mind that we do not intend to offer more than a few major lines of thought and basic themes in Van Ruler's theology, especially as they refer to the question of redemption and historical reality.

Paul Minear once remarked that "we find it unnatural to conceive or to write history as the work of the Holy Spirit."¹⁰⁸ In the same context he questioned the approach of many scholars today who in their thinking on eschatology start with an idea of history that seems to presume that history is a completely known category. Hence, according to Minear, the increased popularity of the term "myth" in modern research. Van Ruler, too, objects to this approach. When we talk about the historical nature of the revelation, we are inclined to view history as a given factor, as a known datum. Then the Spirit is believed to find history as a realm into which he can descend. But, Van Ruler insists, the Spirit does not *find* history; he *creates* history in the midst of the chaos of existence. In other words, "the Spirit is not a moment in history, but the source of history" (145). He takes Barth's well-known dictum that history is a predicate of the revelation and paraphrases it to read that history is a predicate of the Spirit (185 ff.). With these preliminary remarks we wish to indicate that Van Ruler seeks to develop a pneumatology that will be broad enough to encompass a theology of history and culture as well as a theology of mystical experience and personal sanctification.

The first and fundamental thing that must now be said is that Van Ruler's theology is eschatological through and through. He accepts the basic results of Biblical scholarship since Weiss and Schweitzer, which has demonstrated that the Bible's witness is eschatological in nature. To Van Ruler this means that it is fundamentally a witness to the Kingdom of God. This is true of both the Old and the New Testaments. The gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ is above all the gospel of the Kingdom.

But now we come to a basic feature of Van Ruler's eschatological theology, which determines much of its structure. He

maintains that in our whole theological approach we must think *from the end*. The vision of the Kingdom thus becomes all-determinative. According to this view, we must not start in our theological thinking at the beginning, and then, via the middle, move to the end: the eschaton. Nor must we take our starting point in the middle, as has been done so prominently in recent theological developments. Rather, Van Ruler says, we must start with the idea of the Kingdom, the consummation of all things, God's *telos* for his world, and then we must see this end, this future of the Lord, as breaking into the present.¹⁰⁶ God is the coming God. He comes from his future into our time; the Kingdom is present in the mystery of his saving presence; the eschaton is coming and *as such* it is here.

W. H. Velema has called this a "Copernican revolution" in the interpretation of the term "eschatological."¹⁰⁷ The whole concept has far-reaching implications for Van Ruler's theological approach. He claims that all God's dealings—in the Creation, in Israel, in Christ, and in the present must be understood from the perspective of the consummation: the new creation. The future of the Lord as God's destiny for the world becomes the decisive factor, and instead of saying that we are moving toward that future, we rather speak of that future as breaking into our present. Thus the Kingdom becomes a key concept in Van Ruler's theology, and the phrase "historical-eschatological dealings of God with the world" forms a recurring refrain in his writings.

After discussing various concepts of the Kingdom of God, Van Ruler gives as his own definition that it must be understood basically as "the ultimate and redemptive dealings of God with this world" (40). The Kingdom is said to be transcendent, but this concept is not to be given a spatial connotation. The Kingdom is not already present in some "other world." *This*, our world, is God's creation and the continued object of his concern. Nor must "transcendent" be understood exclusively in futurist terms. The Kingdom is transcendent in the mystery of its *presence*; it is the transcendence of the divine saving power. In other words, it is a soteriological transcendence. God conquers the powers of sin and death. This transcendence involves a

hidden presence. It has not yet been revealed what we shall be. Theology does not solve the mystery of the Kingdom; it points out the mystery as God's mystery.

This "theology of fulfillment," then, purposes to be a theology of *Heilstatsachen*. The deed-nature of the revelation is strongly stressed. God has remained faithful to his creation. He redeems it. He comes, and in Israel he has made his Name to dwell upon the earth. He has come in Jesus Christ. In him God was reconciling the world to himself, and in him the Kingdom was present. Now our salvation is in him. The sinner is forgiven and is incorporated into the new mankind which is in Christ Jesus. But the reality of the Kingdom encompasses more than the forgiveness of sins. Van Ruler holds that reconciliation has cosmic implications. "*Man's* sins are forgiven," he states, "but when *sin* is *reconciled*, then that is a cosmic event" (102). In Christ God has acted decisively for the salvation of the world, and through the Spirit the fullness of the redemption that has come to us in Christ is, in a hidden but real way, present in existence.

This leads us to the emphasis on "fulfillment." The New Testament is eschatological in spirit. But, insists Van Ruler, not exclusively so! It is also charismatic in outlook, and this brings into focus the ecclesiastical, the sacramental, the institutional, the historical, and the cultural elements of the Biblical witness.¹⁰⁸ Van Ruler considers it a fatal mistake to identify the charismatic with, or to understand it from the point of view of, the eschatological in the futurist sense. On the other hand, the emphasis on the presence of the Kingdom through the Spirit in no way implies a reduction of the eschatological outlook. Quite to the contrary; the fulfillment itself is eschatological in nature. The presence of the Kingdom as the presence of God's future gives an eschatological orientation to all things. This raises the question of the relationship between the "now" and the "then," to which we will turn in a moment.

First we call attention to our Christian expectation and hope. These are not born of an experience of the absence of God, as if we were longing for heaven because there is no knowledge of redemption in this world. No, our eager longing in the New

Testament sense of the Christian hope finds its origin in the overwhelming richness of the divine presence and in the experience of the love of God. And so the whole creation is waiting with eager longing (Rom., ch. 8). "The future Kingdom of God," J. E. Fison wrote, "is a future not of a reality, which is at present unknown, but of a manifestation, which is at present veiled."¹⁰⁹ Revelation is *apokalypsis*, and as such it is the eschatological category par excellence, for it will bring the manifestation, the unveiling of the hidden mystery of the presence of the Kingdom of God. Then all men shall see, and we shall know as we are known.

The outline of the first major part of Van Ruler's dogmatic study on fulfillment gives a good indication of his basic approach. Chapter 1 is entitled "The Kingdom of God." It presents the perspective of the future of the Lord. The second chapter deals with the theme "Consummation and Fulfillment." The end and the charismatic realities of the present may not be identified. However, at the same time it must be stressed that it is the same Kingdom! The fulfillment is the presence of the future. However, it is this presence in the midst of the chaos of sin, and therefore it is hidden. God has in Christ reconciled the world to himself, and he is redeeming the world. Van Ruler seeks to avoid as much as possible the idea of a process, as if we have a little beginning which will somehow develop into the Kingdom, although especially some of the parables have often been interpreted that way. In Christ we have the fullness of redemption, and through the Spirit the plenitude of the new life in him is present. This is the abiding truth of the position of "realized eschatology."¹¹⁰ However, it is presence *in the flesh*, just as the incarnation was presence in the flesh. Christ the Lord rules among his enemies, and the drama of history is constituted by the fact that God Almighty is wrestling with the forces of this present age. In Chapter 3, entitled "The Fulfillment in the Messiah," this is worked out Christologically, and in Chapter 4, entitled "The Fulfillment Through the Spirit," the same theme is developed pneumatologically.

The basic thesis, then, is that God fulfills all things in the Son, through the Holy Spirit. This Van Ruler calls the Trinitarian

background of the category of "Fulfillment." In Jesus Christ and his saving work, the Kingdom itself was present. In him the future of the new humanity and the new creation were manifested. Origen has expressed this profoundly in the term *autobasileia!* (85). Now we ask what the relationship is between the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of God. Van Ruler replies that the *regnum Christi* is the *regnum Dei* in a certain manner, namely in a hidden form or in the flesh. He objects to the temporal distinction which, for instance, Oscar Cullmann makes in his treatment of this question (88 f.). The Kingdom of God is then conceived of as purely a future entity. Van Ruler maintains that the *regnum Dei* itself is present as the *regnum Christi*. Now Christ rules as King (I Cor. 15:25), then God will be all in all (I Cor. 15:28) (51). Now is the *regnum gratiae*, then will be the *regnum gloriae*. We confess Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This is now true in principle and will become true in reality at some later date. It is true in reality and will be revealed (55 f.), i.e., the veil will be removed.

We must note briefly how in his Christology, Van Ruler divides the accents between the incarnation as *assumptio carnis*, the cross and the act of atonement, and the ascension, which points to the new presence (96 ff.). Van Ruler is emphatic in his view that we may not develop a theology of the Kingdom from the truth of the *assumptio carnis*. We must move on to the truth of the atonement of the guilt of sin. This is the basis of the Kingdom and of the salvation of the world. In this deed of reconciliation God's justice has been established, and thus something of the divine order has been materialized in the midst of the disorder of the chaos of sin. The concept of order is very central in Van Ruler's whole theological thinking. The issue is between the order of God or the chaos of sin. Hence his great emphasis on the fulfillment of the law. Hence also his emphasis on the political order and its place in the Kingdom of Christ. The world is preserved for its divine destiny, and God does not permit it to perish in the chaos of sin.

From the cross and the act of atonement we then move on to the resurrection as the manifestation of the power of the new life, the ascension and the Lordship of Christ, the Spirit and the

fulfillment of all things, and finally the consummation. He has "ascended far above all the heavens," says the New Testament, "*that he might fill all things*" (Eph. 4:10). This text at first sight seems to contain a strange contradiction. In spatial terms, immense distance and close proximity seem to be combined. However, when the ascension is understood theologically, this text presents its inner meaning.

Van Ruler treats the following aspects in the truth of the ascension: elevation or exaltation, concealment, and expectation (103 ff.). "The ascension," he states somewhere, "is that moment in the mystery of Christ which accentuates equally the aspects of glorification and concealment" (195). Jesus Christ is Lord, but his Kingdom is hidden and therefore it is confessed.

First, the idea of exaltation. Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father. This aspect must be emphasized, but it must also be kept in mind that there is an eschatological reservation. The Messiah still rules among his enemies, in the midst of the reality of sin. It is a ruling in the flesh. This leads to the aspect of concealment. Our inheritance is "kept in heaven" (I Peter 1:4); our life (and the whole new creation) is "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). The mystery of the presence in the present is concealment of redemption in the flesh until the day of the final revelation. *Deus absconditus*, *Deus revelatus*. The hiddenness is an aspect of the revelation, for God comes to *us*; he is present in the fallen world.

Finally, the aspect of expectation. We wait for the Lord—not, as was already stated, because of his absence, but rather because of the fullness of his redemptive presence, which we know because the love of God "has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5). When one now takes all these concepts together, Van Ruler believes, one gains some insight into the reality of fulfillment. Christ the Lord, in the power of his resurrection, is in a real but hidden way present in existence. The presence of his Kingdom qualifies all things and gives them their eschatological orientation.

We have noticed how the ascension, far above all the heavens, is related to the filling of all things. The incarnation comes to an end, and there is a new presence of the Lord in the power of

the resurrection. Now we must also observe the relationship which the New Testament posits between the ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit (194 ff.). The Lord who is "leaving" promises the disciples "power from on high" (Luke 24:49). The writer of the Gospel of John especially relates the gift of the Spirit to the glorification of the Lord. It is to the "advantage" of his people that he go away (John 7:39; 16:7)! And Peter states at the time of Pentecost: "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear" (Acts 2:33).

The ascension, then, means presence *spirituali modo*, to use a phrase that occurs frequently in the writings of Calvin. The expression "filled with the Spirit" is frequently used with reference to persons. Van Ruler, however, maintains that, according to the New Testament, the work of the Spirit is not merely anthropological-mystical in nature. It has much wider dimensions; it is historical-cosmic in nature. Van Ruler is defending an all-inclusive approach to the pneumatology (127). The objective-subjective scheme is considered wholly inadequate to express the full truth concerning the reality of the Spirit, as if the work of the Spirit consisted only in making subjectively real what has been objectively revealed in Jesus Christ. Over against this view, Van Ruler insists that the Holy Spirit has its own objective-subjective work. The gift of the Spirit is one among the *magnalia Dei*; it is a historical deed of the living God (199).

In extensive exegetical and Biblical-theological analyses, Van Ruler traces the New Testament concept of *pleroma* in its Christological and its pneumatological contexts. In what he calls "an act of interpretation," he then posits the identity between the fulfillment of all things in Christ and the fulfillment through the Spirit (198). This identity, Van Ruler admits, is not expressly stated in the New Testament. It is a dogmatic-theological conclusion derived from the New Testament data, particularly those pertaining to the ascension. Thus the dispensation of the Spirit is seen as "a *modus* of the Kingdom, the same *modus* as the dispensation of the Son of God in the flesh" (136 f.).

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit has taken place *in the last*.

days (Acts 2:17). This, according to Van Ruler, is the most fundamental insight that guides our approach to the pneumatology (132). The gift of the Spirit is of an eschatological nature. In other words, also pneumatologically we think consistently from the end, i.e., the Spirit, too, is first of all viewed in terms of the Kingdom. This implies that the pneumatology, although developed in intimate conjunction with the Christology, will at the same time receive a certain measure of independence. The coming God, who acts in accordance with his ultimate destiny for the world, is redemptively present in our midst. As in the case of Christ, this is the presence of the Kingdom. As a matter of fact, it is the manner in which the Kingdom receives extension in existence.

Is the presence of the Spirit the Kingdom of God itself? We noticed earlier that Van Ruler speaks of the work of the Spirit as the presence of the Kingdom in a certain manner. We must never ignore the eschatological reservation. The future is here through the power of the Spirit, but there is still a future. There is a penetration of the Kingdom in the present, and this happens *spirituali modo*, but the spiritual realities in the dispensation of fulfillment must not be seen as the Kingdom itself. Rather, they must be viewed as *signs* of the Kingdom.

The basic picture that emerges is then as follows. The whole Old Testament is read in the light of the historical-eschatological dealings of God with the world. He comes from his future to redeem the world, i.e., to bring the world to its destiny: the Kingdom of God. In Jesus Christ the Kingdom has entered decisively into existence. In the atoning sacrifice of Christ the new order of God's righteousness has been established in the midst of the chaos of sin. The work of Christ is applied to our hearts and, through the Holy Spirit, receives extension in sanctified lives as well as in the sociopolitical and cultural structures of the national life. The Spirit is a moment in the Kingdom of Christ and shares in its preliminary and hidden nature. The work of the Spirit is thus understood not merely in anthropological-mystical terms, but in historical-cosmic terms as well. The work of the Spirit is a matter of history, and as such it is also a matter of the heart, not the other way around.

Thus Van Ruler combines several basic New Testament categories, such as "fulfillment," "the last days," and "the firstfruits" and "earnest." The idea of "the last days" might tempt one to adopt an exclusively eschatological position. The interim becomes theologically insignificant. However, the New Testament witness concerning the *pleroma* forces us to take into account the charismatic elements of the gospel, with their ecclesiastical, sacramental, institutional, sociopolitical, and cultural implications. This view in turn might easily lead to a massive ontological realism, which identifies the presence through the Spirit with the Kingdom and neglects the eschatological reservation. Here the repeatedly used concepts of "firstfruits" and "earnest" enter into the picture. The "firstfruits" of the Spirit are not the harvest of the Kingdom; the earnest is not the inheritance.

At this point we must say a few words about Van Ruler's use of the concept of "signs" (65 ff.). All things become signs. In the field of dogmatics the notion of "sign" has usually been reserved for the teaching concerning the signs of the times as the indication of the coming of the Kingdom. In the New Testament we find mentioned such diverse realities as catastrophes in nature and history, false prophets, false christs and the antichrist, persecution of the church and apostasy, the mission of the church and the preaching of the gospel throughout the earth. The various phenomena of existence become signs.

The presence of the Kingdom is not the end, but it affects all reality, and thus things become indications of the end. The gospel is preached, and hearts are touched. Lives are affected and so are the orders and structures of society. This has happened in the Western world, and it can be read from its history. The apostolate of the church in all its aspects is a sign of the power of the Kingdom, a historical embodiment of the reality of the new creation. But the very presence of the Kingdom also arouses the "anti-forces." They too, in their negativity, become signs of the approaching end. This is the drama that constitutes the stuff of history. The work of the Spirit can thus be summarized in the words "power and sign of the Kingdom." In this way the Spirit creates history.

In the consuming vision of the Kingdom and the consumma-

tion of all things, Jesus Christ himself becomes "the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (Matt. 24:30), and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit becomes the great sign upon earth of the approaching Kingdom (Acts 2:17-20) (87, 161). The presence of the redemption in Christ through the power of the Spirit makes many things into signs. The heart of the church lies in the election, for its being is constituted by the sovereign dealings of God. But one can also say that its essence lies in the apostolate, because the church is God's mission in the world, and it belongs to its very nature and being that it is the instrument of God's redemptive work. And the mission of the church is seen in the New Testament as one among the great signs of the end!

In Van Ruler's theology the church does not receive any ontological or definitive status. The church is not the thing-itself. It is a sign, or, as Van Ruler states it, the sum total of the positive signs of the Kingdom. God's redeeming presence has constituted the covenant life of the people of Israel. Through the work of the Spirit we have received the Scriptures. The new community of God's people was born. The Word is preached; the sacraments are administered; hearts are converted, and the soul delights in the mystical presence of the Lord. The prophetic proclamation is addressed to all the principalities and the powers, and in some very fragmentary ways the cultural life of the nation will reflect the fact that the gospel has been preached. None of these redemptive realities are to be regarded as the Kingdom itself. They are positive manifestations of the power of the new life and the reality of the new creation. They are signs, full of the reality which they signify, and as such they point beyond themselves to the consummation of the future of the Lord. "The origin of the sign," Van Ruler writes, "lies in the predestination; the secret of the sign lies in the powerful presence of the Kingdom of God, and the essence of the sign lies in this, that in a hidden way it is full of the matter of which it is a sign."¹¹

The church is indeed central in God's present dealings with the world, but the church does not take the place of the world. The world has been created; the church has been called, and it exists for the sake of the world. God remains faithful to his creation; he has loved the world in Christ and he is redeeming it.

Van Ruler calls the church an *intermezzo*. The divine destiny for the world is not that it shall become the church. The future of the Lord is the Kingdom and the consummation of all things. The church is a sign in our midst that there is an answer to the mystery of the world.¹¹² When understood in the context of the Kingdom, the church will never be absolutized.

An attempt is made here to speak historically about the fulfillment of all things, rather than ontologically, and yet, to speak of it plerophorically and realistically. Van Ruler therefore prefers to refer to the Spirit as the power of the Kingdom, rather than (with Cullmann, for instance) to see the life of the Spirit as the "stuff" of the Kingdom. The latter term seems too massive and might easily lead to the wrong kind of realism (142, 163). Grace is more than *favor Dei*, but at the same time it may not, according to Van Ruler, be conceived of as a transmutation of the being of things. We are advised not to think too much in terms of the being of things, anyhow. Reality, as was stressed previously, does not rest in itself, in its own being. Things rest in God's creative Word and work; they are what God *declares* them to be (241 ff.).¹¹³

Sacramental grace is one aspect of the fulfillment. So is prophecy. So are the life of discipleship in faith, hope, and love, the mystical experience, the sanctified will, the healing of mind and body, and all the various embodiments of the new creation in the sociopolitical and cultural realms.¹¹⁴ The sacramental, or the ethical, or the mystical elements may not be isolated and then absolutized; they all are manifestations of the historical-eschatological work of the Holy Spirit. In faith we receive a morsel of bread and a little wine, and Christ the Lord is with us in the power of his renewing grace. The prophetic Word is proclaimed; the laws of the land are formulated, and somewhere there is a reflection of the fact that the gospel has been preached to this nation. The Word has not returned to God empty. Where the gospel is preached and heard, there will be embodiments of the new order of God, which finds its foundation in the atoning work of the Christ, who fulfilled the law. Thus existence is preserved for the future of the Lord. The chaos of sin is restrained. We are inclined to smile when someone speaks of the Christian

West. It all doesn't go so deep. But what would the West be like if the gospel had not been preached on its shores? Are not those correct who say that even our atheisms can be understood only when viewed against their Christian background? Van Ruler emphasizes very much the preserving work of the Spirit, as well as its hidden, fragmentary, and tentative nature.

The last word in this theology, as in all true theology, remains: mystery. In faith we now live the life of God's children, and "it does not yet appear what we shall be" (I John 3:2). Even less can we conceive what the world shall be. We see in a glass darkly, but in the love with which God has loved us and through the faith of which our hope is born, we have a vision with universal dimensions. Otto Weber has remarked that the church in our time ought to give special attention to the witness of the letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians, as well as to I Peter, because the presence of God is described in them in its wide and cosmic dimensions.¹¹⁵ Van Ruler is one among the contemporary Protestant theologians who has tried to present a theology of all things. Where will it lead us when we begin to take these elements of the New Testament witness more seriously than has generally been done by Protestant scholars in the past?¹¹⁶

Roger Hazelton, in his book *New Accents in Contemporary Theology*, has warned us against claims for a "theology of culture" or a "theology of history" that cannot be made good. "There is something decidedly presumptuous," he writes, "in the implication that theology is a sort of master perspective by which any sort of event or meaning can be reckoned with and put in its proper intellectual place."¹¹⁷ Such warnings are much in order. Our neat intellectual schemes cannot grasp and contain the dynamics of history. And yet, the church seeks to confess what she has heard and seen and what she believes, also, concerning history. The confessional language of the church is not always the same as that of the historian, although, as Hazelton emphatically and justly points out, theologians ought not to be indifferent toward history and historical knowledge in the historian's sense. He himself, however, moves beyond this kind of historical judgment when he states: "To call Christianity a historical faith is to declare that set down in the midst of historical happenings

there are mighty, unmistakable clues to the meaning of history as a whole."¹¹⁸ In other words, there are "signs of the times," grasped in faith, and theology is ever struggling with the question of how we shall read these signs and interpret them. To this question Van Ruler has sought to contribute some insights.

Before we conclude this section we shall refer briefly to a few other scholars, especially Dutch theologians, who are concerned with the same questions we have discussed in this study. Thus Van Ruler's thought will be placed in a little wider context. When W. H. Velema, in his previously mentioned book, seeks to "place" Van Ruler's theology, he mentions in particular the great nineteenth-century Dutch scholar Abraham Kuyper as well as Karl Barth. To these the name of O. Noordmans is added.¹¹⁹ The first two are scholars against whom Van Ruler reacts critically, and Noordmans is presented as a thinker who has contributed positively to his theology. Any such "placing" of a scholar has some obvious and very severe limitations. One could write extensively on Van Ruler's relationship to a number of scholars both in the past and the present. In such an analysis, especially the name of another great Dutch scholar in the nineteenth century would come to the fore, namely, Ph. J. Hoedemaker, who at first was a collaborator of Kuyper and later became his opponent. Hoedemaker's theocratic theology has had a great influence on Van Ruler. But such an extensive analysis of relationships is out of order in this study. For various reasons Velema's references make sense, and I shall follow him in saying a few words about Van Ruler's relationship to these scholars.

In reading Van Ruler's works, it soon becomes clear that he himself constantly seeks to define his position as an alternative to the theologies of both Kuyper and Barth. A theologian does not work in a vacuum, and this particular tendency in Van Ruler's writings must be understood in the light of the Dutch theological situation of the past decades. Kuyper was the great moving force behind the Neo-Calvinist movement, which had its beginning in the nineteenth century and still today has a great theological as well as sociopolitical influence in the Netherlands. One of the most renowned dogmatic theologians in that tradi-

tion today is G. C. Berkouwer, professor at the Free University in Amsterdam, a Christian institution founded by Kuyper. In Berkouwer's books, many of which have appeared in English, one can detect a dependence on the theology of Kuyper, as well as a wholesome sense of independence that allows him to criticize at different points and to present corrections.

Karl Barth has exercised a powerful influence during the past decades on a number of the most prominent Dutch theologians outside of the Neo-Calvinist camp. Some of them, too, have at times drawn sociopolitical implications from the basic theological orientation which they had found in his works. Van Ruler's books were published during the postwar years, at a time when the national life of the country had to be rebuilt after the years of Nazi occupation. A hard lesson had been learned, namely, what an ideology could do to the sociopolitical and cultural life of a nation. What beliefs would provide a guide during the years of reconstruction? Van Ruler held that both the theology of Kuyper and the thinking of Karl Barth, particularly in its earlier stages, formed an inadequate basis for a theology of sociopolitical relevance.

Abraham Kuyper wrote many books, among them a large volume on the work of the Holy Spirit, first published in 1888.¹²⁰ Kuyper, too, had a great interest in the sociopolitical and cultural implications of the Christian faith. As we noticed already, he founded a Christian university, and for years he served as Prime Minister of the Netherlands. A determinative concept in his theology of culture was that of the antithesis between the regenerate and unregenerate, the church and the world. Hence the tremendous efforts expended to establish all sorts of separate Christian magazines, a political party, Christian newspapers, labor unions, and a Christian school system.

This antithesis theology finds its roots in Kuyper's regeneration theology. The conflict between the church and the world is caused by the fact that there are two kinds of people, those who have been regenerated and the unregenerate. The idea is that the former organize themselves on the basis of so-called Christian principles and thus form their own cultural sphere within the national life of the country. This movement has had a powerful

impact on Dutch society during the past seventy-five years, both for better and for worse. In some respects the isolation has probably arrested the process of secularization, but in other respects it may actually have contributed to the secularization of the national life.

Van Ruler rejects this idea of what he calls a "ghetto culture." He does not seek the total Christian reality in the depth of the human heart. He starts with the historical-eschatological dealings of God. Through the proclamation of the Word and the work of the Spirit, he claims, there is an impact on the state and on the structures of society, as well as on the soul of the individual. The Christian quality of a culture is indeed often much a surface matter, but, Van Ruler would say, were that "thin varnish" to be removed, as happened in Nazi Germany, and were we to confront the heathen subsoil just beneath the surface, as in the case of the ideology of "blood and soil," we would recognize that the preserving nature of the Christian impact has not gone so deep.

Kuyper defended the concept of the so-called "regeneration in the narrow sense," and he has worked it out with great consistency. This regeneration refers to the presumed infusion or implanting of a new life before conversion. A "something" is implanted in human nature, perhaps during the years of early childhood, and this is seen as a secret or dormant reality that later, at the time of conversion, comes to life through the work of the Holy Spirit. In Kuyper's works the Spirit was, above everything else, regarded as Vivificator. In other words, according to this view, which many other theologians hold, justification is based on a previous act of God whereby a hidden "seed" has been implanted into the human soul as the *beginning* of the process of new life. We *experience* the redemptive reality as a *justificatio impii*, but actually the new reality has been there all along, only in a dormant state, waiting to be vitalized by the Spirit. Justification, then, ultimately would rest on sanctification. Regeneration is described in Kuyper as *the* great act of God in the life of man, and it is seen as a reality that splits mankind into two groups. This is the basis of the emphasis on the antithesis then embodied in sociopolitical and cultural movements.

In order to emphasize the absolute otherness of the Christian, Kuyper used very realistic terms to describe the reality of the new life in the regenerated heart. The question to Van Ruler is not whether the Bible, too, does not often speak in antithetical terms about the new and the old, the church and the world. It obviously does. Van Ruler, too, would want to see the sanctification of the life in Christ as a reality. The question is whether this reality may be described in the ontological terms that Kuyper was inclined to use. According to Van Ruler, the whole idea of "substance" must be removed from the concept of *gratia interna*, because he believes that the Roman Catholic nature-grace doctrine, as well as Kuyper's regeneration doctrine, have clearly shown us the problematical nature of this whole notion (209).¹²¹

On the other hand is Karl Barth, with his theology of the Word, and the dialectical theology in general that some decades ago tended to stress the crisis element in revelation and "the Moment" of encounter. Van Ruler viewed these developments in the 1930's with great concern, and over against the Christocentric personalism that came to such powerful expression in the dialectical theology, he has stressed the idea of the *extension* of redemption in existence, while at the same time seeking to avoid what he considered to be the pitfalls of Rome and of Neo-Calvinism. Says Velema: "In the doctrine of sanctification Van Ruler chooses his position between Barth and Kuyper. The former holds that the Word alone can be Christian, while the latter is of the opinion that the matter itself must be Christian. According to Van Ruler the order is the only Christian reality in the world."¹²²

We have seen what is meant by "order." In the atoning work of Christ the order of God's justice has been established in the midst of man's disorder and the chaos of sin. This is the Messianic aspect of redemption. Now, through the preaching of the gospel and the work of the Spirit, this order finds a certain preliminary and fragmentary extension in existence. This happens in the sanctified life of the individual and it happens in the life of the nation. There are statutes, configurations, embodiments of redemption in existence. This is the pneumatological aspect of redemption.

In order to defend this position Van Ruler must move beyond the so-called "Christomonism" of Karl Barth. The latter takes his starting point in the Mediator. He views everything from the middle, the Christological center. Van Ruler views things from the end,¹²³ and approaches the Christology as well as the pneumatology from the point of view of the Kingdom. Christ's coming and his redemptive work is a moment in God's historical-eschatological dealings with the world. It is indeed the central moment, for in view of the reality of sin the atoning work of Christ had become necessary. However, this moment may not be absolutized, and developed into a monism of grace. Then, Van Ruler fears, we would lose the world, and history, and culture. Theologically, we do not know what to do with them anymore.

This way of understanding Christology eschatologically, of viewing the incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, and the ascension as "only" moments in God's saving dealings with the world, in a sense relativizes the middle because of the dynamic-historical view from the perspective of the end. We cannot stop with Christology. Nor ought we to move from Christology to ecclesiology, as is done by those who see the church as the prolongation of the incarnation. Van Ruler wants to get away from the idea of continuity, with its organic-biological connotations. He puts the emphasis on God's historical deeds. There is a constant newness in God's actions, and this is the newness of the historical work of the Spirit.¹²⁴

The name of the late O. Noordmans was mentioned, and rightly so, because this pastor-scholar has exercised a considerable influence on Dutch theology in recent years. In many profound and finely written essays he has struggled with the questions that concern us in this study. He never became the "father" of a "school." He was always in conversation, with Barth and the Barthians, with the Neo-Calvinists, with the sacramentalists and the representatives of an incarnational theology. He, too, like Calvin, has been designated as a "theologian of the Spirit."¹²⁵ Pneumatology does indeed occupy a central place in his writings. He saw the realm of the Spirit, not in terms of process (grace renewing nature), nor in terms of the continuity of the incarnation, but as the realm of *repetition*, viz., in historical terms. How-

ever, he objected also against an excessive emphasis on *je und je*, in one's concept of revelation, the presumed discontinuity of the historical revelation which in this moment and in that moment breaks through into existence as a flash of lightning.¹²⁶ Of Noordmans too, as in the case of Van Ruler, it can be said that he sought to develop an eschatological theology which would give proper consideration to the work of the Spirit on the *earth*.

"Everything in the incarnation," wrote Noordmans, "is aimed at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we might better say that the incarnation was from beginning to end destined to be taken up in the work of the Spirit."¹²⁷ A one-sided emphasis on the continuation of the incarnation, he believed, tends to neglect the significance of the Word as well as of the work of the Spirit. Living from the eschatological perspective, the church will not soon absolutize itself. It will be more deeply aware of its nature as pilgrim church, the church on the way and very much the church in the world. The Spirit, according to Noordmans, creates order. He produces a certain style of life (Noordmans saw this exemplified especially in the Pilgrim Fathers!), and historically the Word and the Spirit have also created certain forms in the life of the community. Without wishing to overdraw our case as to the similarities in approach between Noordmans and Van Ruler, we can say that the latter found a welcome support in the works of the former when he began to formulate his own thoughts on the relationship between revelation and existence.

In discussing recent developments in pneumatology in Dutch theology, we ought to mention some works of H. van Oyen. For a number of years now, he has been a professor at Basel, and his more recent books have been written in German, but he is a native of the Netherlands. When he accepted the position in Basel, he entered Barth's own territory, so to say, and engaged in polemics concerning the nature of the redemptive presence of God in the world. He uses the phrase "*Anwaltschaft des Geistes*," the "advocacy of the Spirit." Van Oyen's terminology has at times caused confusion, but this much is clear: he uses this concept to express the truth of the indwelling of the Spirit in the

time between the ascension and the consummation. There is presence, the gift of God's grace in Christ, and this presence he sometimes refers to as "pneumatic Parousia."¹²⁸

Van Oyen, too, reacts strongly against the idea that revelation exclusively takes place *je und je*, ever anew in the moment of encounter. In the naïveté of the language of faith, he asserts, we can and must speak of redemption as being *there*, available (*verfügbar*), as it were. Of course, revelation is not at our disposal as if in some magical fashion God were under our control, but it is the presence according to the promise of the divine grace. Faith knows of the Kingdom that has come and is coming. In the manner of faith we witness to this "fact," and, Van Oyen never tires of insisting, this reality definitely does not imply a presence at certain points in the midst of a general absence.¹²⁹ In the works of this author we once again find a plea to consider more fully the charismatic aspects of the New Testament witness, and to move beyond the idea of faith as an existential encounter. Van Oyen also questions the notion that the relation between Christology and pneumatology can be adequately expressed in the objective-subjective scheme. Can one speak of the subjective indwelling of the Spirit in the body of Christ, he asks, or is the presence in the Sacrament subjective?¹³⁰

When Van Oyen speaks about the presence of the *regnum Dei* in the *regnum Christi* through the Holy Spirit as a presence in the flesh, his language reminds one strongly of Van Ruler's terminology.¹³¹ He himself has expressed a certain kinship with Van Ruler, at least in the latter's intention to come to a more positive evaluation of the world and its cultural life.¹³² The approach these scholars take in this effort has now become clear. They set a pneumatological realism, some in more, and others in less, ontological terms, over against what they consider to be an excessive actualism and personalism in recent theological developments. They generally seek support for this position in those New Testament writings which contain a cosmic orientation. As we have noticed earlier, in the circles of dialectical theology itself, and especially in the later works of Barth, the same movement toward a stronger pneumatological emphasis can be found.

Nevertheless, the manner in which one conceives of the relationship between Christology and pneumatology remains one of the thorniest theological questions of our day.

In the introduction to this study we referred to H. Berkhof's book on the theme "Christ the meaning of history." It represents one of the really significant contributions in the search for a Protestant theology of history. He sets forth in what sense Jesus can be called the end of history,¹³³ and in what respect he must be viewed as the beginning of a new history.¹³⁴ He then discusses the apostolate of the church as a historical force.¹³⁵ Missions have to a considerable degree molded the cultural life of the Western world. Berkhof comes to the conclusion that history must be seen in terms of an analogy of what has taken place in Jesus Christ. In other words, both the reality of the cross¹³⁶ and the reality of the resurrection¹³⁷ are operative in history. The latter is a manifestation of the reality and the power of the new age in the present time. Berkhof, like some of the other scholars we have mentioned, sees this as the real but hidden presence of the Kingdom which is confessed in faith. The struggle between the present age and the new age, between God's order and the world's order, is still going on. The gospel itself evokes resistance, and the presence of the Kingdom involves conflict and persecution as well as the peace which is in Christ. There are both positive and negative signs of the end. The eventual climax of this conflict is portrayed in the apocalyptic images of the New Testament.

In answer to a critic who inquired whether a theology of the incarnation does not demand a concept that would express more clearly than the idea of "analogy" the real presence of the plenitude of grace in the world, Berkhof replied that he seeks to travel "a narrow path between existentialism and ontology."¹³⁸ He has acknowledged his indebtedness to Van Ruler,¹³⁹ although the book itself is evidence of his independence.¹⁴⁰

In a later booklet, dealing with the question of "the Catholicity of the church,"¹⁴¹ we receive further insights into Berkhof's position. In this study he has presented an analysis of the concept of *pleroma* as it is used in the New Testament, both in noun form and in verb form. Thus he attempts to do what we heard Otto Weber advise, namely, to pay closer attention to the mes-

sage of Colossians and Ephesians than has generally been done in Protestant theology. The main interest in this book is ecclesiological, and as such it deals with a key issue in the present-day ecumenical dialogue: the question of where one can find the community of Christ's people which, in its total life, expresses most faithfully the fullness of the redemptive reality that has been given us in him. However, Berkhof places the church in cosmic-eschatological perspective, and then the concept of *pleroma* inevitably leads one into the theology of history.

Berkhof's exegetical analysis leads him to the conclusion that *pleroma* is described in the New Testament as both a gift and a goal, a destiny. *Pleroma* refers to the gift of God's grace in Jesus Christ. The factuality of his accomplished work is proclaimed to us. In Christ we have received the fullness of redemption. But *pleroma* is a destiny and a promise as well, a goal, a reality that is in the process of becoming true, the development of a future (52 ff.). The text makes it clear, according to Berkhof, that where the fullness is mentioned, which the church receives in Christ, this refers primarily to the power and the rule exercised by the Lord. Take such key texts as Eph. 1:23 and 4:10. Here we have the idea of the Christ who "fills all." This means, concludes Berkhof, that Christ, on the basis of his conquest over the powers, exercises actual rule over the world (56). The noun "*pleroma*," then, when used in reference to the church, must be interpreted as the realm over which Christ rules, his *dominium* (57). The New Testament proclaims Christ's rule over *ta panta*—all things. This is at present still a hidden reality, but somewhere in the cosmos there is a realm where his Lordship and rule are acknowledged and obeyed, and thus they become manifested. In this way the church is put into a cosmic-eschatological perspective and is understood in the light of God's ultimate destiny with the world (59).

What is the relationship between *pleroma* as actual gift and the fullness as destiny and process? For an answer to this question Berkhof turns particularly to the passage in Col. 2:6 to 3:17 (62 ff.). Christ is Lord. We, the members of his body, have been incorporated into him and have been placed in the sphere of his *dominium*. Now the peculiar New Testament combination

of indicative and imperative comes into the picture. We who are in Christ must grow into his fullness; we must share in the growth of the body of Christ. In short, we must not again become subjected to the powers and the principalities of this present age. Christ has conquered these powers. Now his rule must be extended into all the spheres of life. Thus, through the church, his body, there will be historical manifestations of his rule. The struggle with the powers is still raging (66), but the life of the church becomes a "prophetic-exemplaric" reality pointing to the destiny of the world.

This is a Christocentric theology. The emphasis is on Christ the Lord, and Christ alone! "The more exclusive we become," Berkhof states, "the more inclusive we shall be. But this order cannot be reversed. He who starts with the 'all' does not arrive at Christ, only the other way around. . . . The more catholic the church is, the more her obedience will be directed at her Head and her expectation at 'all things' " (85).

Berkhof shies away from a Christian cosmological theology. He has reservations about the otherwise brilliant essay by Joseph A. Sittler, referred to earlier (91). He prefers to concentrate his attention on man and mankind. "All mankind" is the manner in which he renders the term "*ta panta*" in Ephesians and Colossians. He admits that the expression undoubtedly intends to imply more (91). But he maintains that the powers spoken of in these Biblical writings are portrayed primarily as powers that hold control over human life.¹⁴² In sum, a "Christian philosophy of nature is not to be found in Paul" (91). The apostle starts with Christ. Then he moves to the church as the body of Christ. Finally all mankind comes into view. Then, in the total vision, Berkhof says, the lower levels of creation become included as an *accompanying thought*. Man remains the true representative of creation in the relationship to God (91). We are reminded here of the position of W. Norman Pittenger, discussed earlier in this study. He, too, seeks to develop a theology with cosmic dimensions, but he sees human life as the area where, at least as far as we can see, the eternal and temporal are in peculiarly intense interpenetration. Pittenger's idea of an "incarnational universe" would, as far as Berkhof is concerned, contain too much of the

idea of "organism." The Bible, Berkhof admits, uses biological terminology, but as one among a variety of categories of a juridical, political, economic, or cultic nature (71). Berkhof wishes to keep the historical and the prophetic aspects of the revelation central. He finds support for this position in the New Testament concept of *pleroma*, with its implied notion of the *dominium Christi*. This rule of Christ takes place through the Spirit. There is reason to believe that in the not-too-distant future Berkhof will more specifically deal with the pneumatological aspects of this whole question.

The "narrow path between existentialism and ontology" was mentioned. We see this struggle going on where theologians seek to formulate a position between, or rather beyond, that of both Rome and Rudolf Bultmann. We see it taking place where Protestant scholars seek to combine the Catholic-cosmic vision with the existential personalism that has so fruitfully influenced recent theological developments. In this chapter we have traced this struggle, and especially its pneumatological implications, in a few representative theologians. They differ among themselves, but they have this in common, that they seek to go beyond a one-sided existentialism and a metaphysical sacramentalism by devoting closer attention to the theological significance of the ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The concept of historical revelation which thus emerges is their contribution to the ecumenical search for an "integrated theological structure" in our day.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have finished the survey; now we must furnish the solution! This is a tempting thought, especially the idea of providing an integrated theological position that would incorporate the valuable insights of the various conflicting views, and that would thus transcend and overcome what at present appears to be an insoluble dilemma in ecumenical theology. I shall not attempt such a conclusion.

The author's own preferences and prejudices have had ample opportunity to come to expression in the preceding pages, sometimes rather subtly, at other times quite explicitly. No good cause would be served in presenting them in a final systematic form. In the Introduction a conclusion was promised that would consist of a few inconclusive remarks. The purpose of these remarks is to point to the task that lies ahead, rather than to proffer a solution. Several key questions have presented themselves in the course of our survey that today call for our concentrated theological efforts. We ought to approach them as ecumenical concerns.

We first mention the theme "faith and the facts," which in some form or another has preoccupied theological endeavors since the emergence of historicocritical research. The scientific-historical method has had an immense impact on theological developments during the past few centuries. Only a romantic fundamentalism would desire a return to the so-called precritical days. Historical research has made a vigorous attempt to get at the facts, and quite successfully so, for in many respects the results have been truly remarkable. Much factual knowledge,

used liberally by even the most conservative scholars, has been uncovered for us by the rigid discipline of critical research.

In the meantime, it was not always kept in mind sufficiently that faith does not find its ground and being in factual knowledge. Especially criticism with a destructive design was inclined to forget its own dogmatism and to overlook its own limitations. The reactions of the opponents of the critical approach did not seldom contribute to the misunderstanding, for their tenacious defense of Biblical history as it had been traditionally transmitted gave the impression that they were battling for the sake of a *fides historica*.

Gradually it became recognized in ever widening circles that the facts themselves that underlie the Christian faith have come to us not as inspired factual reports but as witnesses of faith, which in many instances is expressed in the symbolic language of faith. On this point much ground has been gained, and it has opened up new opportunities for ecumenical conversation. It is refreshing to see a conservative scholar like Bernard Ramm write of these things quite frankly in the fortnightly *Christianity Today*. As Christians, he has stated, "we . . . do not expect confirmation of *all* statements in the Bible, nor do we expect the Scriptural history to be free from all problems." He further has pointed out that the historiography of the ancient world does not conform to the contemporary scientific historiography, and calls the Creation account a "projection in reverse," i.e., a witness born of prophetic faith.¹

The certainty of faith, then, is not the certainty of detailed factuality, because faith in the Biblical sense is not a *fides historica*. The increased emphasis in recent decades on a theological interpretation of the Old Testament and a kerygmatic interpretation of the New Testament has been conjoined with a strongly existential concept of faith. We owe much to the existential movement of thought. The emphasis on decision, involvement, and commitment is ever needed if the church is going to be a living church with a living faith, which finds its origin in the living Word of God.

While we have reached a widespread consensus on the view that faith is not established, nor is it authenticated, by a mere

historical knowledge of the facts, we now face the challenge from a different reaction. Why retain any interest in the factuality of events at all? Why not rest content with the fact of faith? These are questions raised by Bultmann and some of his followers. For instance, we cannot penetrate beyond the kerygma of the early church concerning Christ and discover the historical Jesus. Everything they said was born of their resurrection faith. So, why be interested in relating the historical Jesus to the kerygma at all? Faith, that of the primitive church and ours, becomes the central event.

The challenge is being met in many circles by a renewed emphasis on historical fact and historical knowledge. In other words, theological writers show an increased reluctance to escape into the realm of faith, while telling the historian that we are not interested in his kind of facts at all. In Eric C. Rust's constructively conservative book *Salvation History*, one finds a frank facing up to the dramatic, poetical, and symbolic language of Biblical salvation history, while at the same time an attempt is made to show that these images are "bound up with historical actuality," and are grounded in it. He holds that "historical minutiae" and "detailed chronological frameworks" do not belong essentially to the revelation, but that the "climacteric events" do.² We must believe, he says, that in the Gospels' accounts concerning Jesus we are "touching historical actuality,"³ although we realize that these accounts are not always accurate from the point of view of the canons of modern historiography.

An imposing work on the theme "The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ," recently published in Germany and containing contributions from nearly fifty well-known contemporary theologians,⁴ presents much evidence of the sense of urgency with which scholars from various traditions discuss these matters. One notices a genuine fear that we are in danger of losing the essence of the confession that the Word became flesh and that we thus will end up in a new docetism. Shall we, with Bultmann, be satisfied with the "that" of Jesus' historical existence and raise no further questions, or is it theologically important and necessary to move beyond this minimum, seeking a broader historical base?

As we have seen earlier, among Bultmann's own students there are those who, not out of a mere historical interest, but out of "an interest of faith," seek to move beyond his position. The early church itself showed in her kerygma this interest of faith in the "facts" of the words and the deeds of Jesus.⁵ The interest here is not one of a rationalistic objectification, but it combines both the aspect of objectivity, which is part of all rational thought, and the aspect of existential concern. Those who today seek to establish a firm relationship between historical factuality and faith are by and large quite unwilling to see the knowledge of faith in terms of a simple subject-object scheme. Hence one can find such terms as "contemplative participation" and "existential rationality." The nature of the Biblical documents makes the task a difficult one, but, as Cullmann has remarked, this does not absolve the historian of his duty.⁶

In Old Testament research one finds the same issues discussed. Gerhard von Rad's *Old Testament Theology*, as "the theology of Israel's historical traditions," has recently been published in English. He, too, accepts the notion of "historical poetry" with respect to the Biblical *Heilsgeschichte*, but he insists that the kerygmatic picture "is founded in the actual history and has not been invented." Any divorce on this score would leave us, he believes, "a bloodless ghost."⁷

A particularly articulate voice in the present-day defense of the theological importance of "earthly history" is that of Wolfhart Pannenberg.⁸ He sees Israel's concept of history as rooted in her confession of God.⁹ He further maintains that all theological questions have meaning only in the framework of history,¹⁰ and that an understanding of what it means that in Christ the end of history is present will enable a person to gain a perspective on history as a whole.¹¹ How can the idea of the unity of history (anyone who has anything worthwhile to say on history uses this concept) and the contingency of historical occurrences be reconciled? In order to do this, Pannenberg believes, the historian needs the witness of the believer concerning the transcendent God.¹² In other words, as theologians we must not too glibly accept a view of history, even if it is called scientific.

This discussion on "faith and the facts," the kerygma and the

nature of the history which underlies it, as well as on the role of historical research, is presently very much in a state of searching. The assignment for theological research on this theme remains a great one. It is a task that will require our ecumenical endeavors.

The same is true of the other theme that we have stressed very strongly in this study, namely, that of "Holy Spirit and history." We have passed through an era of creative studies in the realm of the Christology. We are not leaving these contributions behind, but there is evidence that they are more and more being unmatched by pneumatological concerns and research. The question has been raised with growing urgency whether perhaps here, too, we are being threatened by a modern-day docetism.

There are interesting indications in the contemporary church of the great interest in the work of the Holy Spirit. One could mention, for instance, the phenomenon of speaking in tongues and the relatively rapid spreading of this phenomenon on the American scene today. This is not the place to analyze possible reasons for this. Quite understandably, these phenomena have led to more frequent discussions on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. They have also led to ecumenical dialogue, for instance, between Catholic-minded people and members of Pentecostal communions. Such sharing of views in the reality of the Spirit, namely, in the communion in Christ, is obviously most important. We cannot ignore any manifestations of the work of the Spirit. And yet, how easily might one be led into a very narrow concept of pneumatology because of preoccupation with, and disproportionate emphasis on, one particular aspect of the work of the Spirit, thus losing sight of the universal perspectives of the Bible.

On this question, too, our study points basically to the task that lies ahead. Those who are searching for an integrated theological structure of truly Catholic stature will have to do much listening to one another and much learning from one another.

APPENDIX: A NOTE ON THE THEOLOGY OF PAUL TILLICH

Many readers, each according to their particular views and predilections, will undoubtedly wonder why a certain scholar, or perhaps even a "school" of theology, has not been specifically dealt with in the preceding pages. As I have indicated before, every writer must live with his options as well as with his personal limitations, which have at least in part determined his options. Furthermore, this book is intended as a contribution to an open conversation, and its incompleteness, due to the fact that some worthwhile insights on the subject have not been incorporated, may itself become an invitation and challenge to others to participate in the debate.

Having said this, we must indicate why, nevertheless, this separate note on the theology of Paul Tillich is appended to this study. On the one hand, the importance of Tillich's theological contribution as a scholar of world renown makes it difficult to ignore him in any responsible study on contemporary theological questions. On the other hand, however, the nature of his contribution, with its radical reinterpretation of the Christian faith, made it virtually impossible to incorporate his views into the main body of this survey. They simply do not fit into the structure.

Tillich is frequently designated as an existentialist theologian. There is good reason for this, because a strongly existential emphasis runs all through his system. As a matter of fact, his very theological method is determined by existential concerns. He calls it "the method of correlation" that "explains the contents of

the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence" (I, 60).¹ Hence Tillich's desire to develop an apologetic theology that is an "answering theology" (I, 6), for he believes that "the Christian message provides the answers to the questions implied in human existence" (I, 64).

The concept of revelation in Tillich's theology is also existential through and through. This can be seen in his repeated emphasis that there is no revelation without the receiving of revelation. The act of reception is seen as part of the revelatory event (I, 35). "The objective occurrence and the subjective reception," Tillich says, "belong to the whole event of revelation" (I, 111). This existential understanding of revelation then leads, in turn, to the identification of revelation and salvation, the latter being called "a creative and transforming participation of every believer in the correlation of revelation" (I, 145).

One could further point to Tillich's definition of "faith" as "the state of being ultimately concerned."² He himself has stated that the word "concern" points "to the existential character of religious experience" (I, 13). We notice also his own concern with the question of being, nonbeing or being-not, and anxiety.³ The second volume of the *Systematic Theology* has as its theme "Existence and the Christ," which means the same as "sin and salvation," but now reinterpreted in terms of existential estrangement and "New Being" through Jesus as the Christ. Tillich wants to hold on to the word "sin" because it stresses the element of personal responsibility and the idea of the *sinfulness* of our estrangement (II, 46). "New Being" is regarded as "the restorative principle" of his whole system, and it can be defined as "essential being under the conditions of existence, conquering the gap between essence and existence" (II, 119).

All this reminds one of a strongly existential and personalistic theology. However, the thoroughly existential quality of Tillich's theology does not lead him to adopt an exclusive theology of the Word of the type of Bultmann's kerygma theology. Over against such a view he emphasizes the importance of a Logos Christology. "Taken seriously," Tillich asserts, "the doctrine of the Logos prevents the elaboration of a theology of the spoken

or written word, which is *the* Protestant pitfall" (I, 157). Any such attempt he would regard as an intellectualization of the revelation.

Tillich wants to have room for historical events and sacramental realities. He views revelation as the manifestation of the hidden mystery, which is being-itself, and which can be experienced as the abyss as well as the ground or the power of being (I, 108 ff.). Anything can become a medium of revelation, or, in Tillich's own terminology, "There is no reality, thing, or event which cannot become a bearer of the mystery of being and enter into a revelatory correlation" (I, 118). In reading Tillich, one is at times reminded of the idea of a "sacramental universe,"⁴ which we encountered in writers both in and outside of the Catholic tradition.⁵ However, any idea of grace as "supranatural substance" is completely foreign to Tillich's thought, with its anti-supernaturalistic orientation (I, 258 f.). On this latter question we shall say more in a moment.

The answers which, according to Tillich, the Christian message provides to the questions implied in human existence are "contained in the revelatory events in which Christianity is based" (I, 64). Here is a perspective on history, and its role in the revelatory constellation. "If history points beyond itself in a correlation of ecstasy and sign-event, revelation occurs," or, to say the same thing differently, "history itself is revelatory only if a special event or a series of events is experienced ecstatically as miracle" (I, 120). In short, some occurrence or series of occurrences become to someone transparent to the ground of being, and thus revelation takes place.

From the foregoing remarks one might gather that relevant references to Tillich's thought might have been inserted in any of the preceding chapters, since his theology has *heilsgeschichtliche* aspects to it, is strongly existential in orientation, contains the notion of a "sacramental universe," and works (as announced for the volume of the *Systematic Theology* yet to be published) with the concepts of the Kingdom, the Spirit, and history. However, in order to do justice to what Tillich calls his "system," this separate "note" is necessary, because the traditional symbols are reinterpreted in a very radical way.

It would be quite easy to quote choice sentences from Tillich's works and then imply that these can be fitted into a traditional theology of history. "Revelation and salvation are elements of God's directing creativity," we read, and then this sentence follows: "God directs the processes of individual, social, and universal life toward their fulfillment in the Kingdom of God" (I, 157). Here we have a whole theology of history *in nuce*! However, the language alone bears a semblance to traditional theology; the meanings are quite different.

Tillich, as is well known, seeks to formulate a theological position that transcends or overcomes the old naturalism-versus-supranaturalism antithesis. This is fundamental to the whole system, for it expresses the basic intention of Tillich's doctrine of God, and it determines his use of the term "being-itself." God may never be portrayed as a being, not even as the highest Being. Tillich not only rejects the more crude supranaturalistic conceptions, which are still so widely prevalent even in educated circles, both in and outside the church, but the more refined forms of a supranaturalistic theology are cast aside as well. "The main argument against it," he states, "is that it transforms the infinity of God into a finiteness which is merely an extension of the categories of finitude" (II, 6). In short, God may not be made subject to the categories of space and time. God does not "exist," if we mean thereby that he exists as a being among other beings. It could be pointed out that sensitive Christian thinkers have for centuries warned against primitive literalistic interpretations of the space-time categories when used in reference to God. Their symbolic nature has long been recognized, but is still neglected in much preaching and teaching. Now Tillich seeks to "solve" the problem once and for all by ridding theology of all supranaturalism.

God is called the ground of being, while at the same time it is claimed that he infinitely transcends that of which he is the ground. However, this may not be made to imply that there exists a "superworld" of divine objects. It means that within itself the finite world points beyond itself (II, 7). The world is self-transcendent. This self-transcendence in the state of reality is experienced in ecstasy as a state of mind (II, 8). Consequently,

the idea of "ecstasy" has become central in Tillich's doctrine of revelation. How, then, must we conceive of the relation between God and the world? "God's presence and power should not be sought in the supranatural interference in the ordinary course of events," Tillich replies, "but in the power of the New Being to overcome the self-destructive consequences of existential estrangement in and through the created structures of reality" (II, 161).

God, then, is viewed as being-itself in the sense of the power of being or the power to conquer nonbeing. This is the heart of Tillich's ontology. In his book *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* (The University of Chicago Press, 1955), Tillich has attempted to show that, although the Biblical literature does not specifically raise the ontological question, it is still necessary for us to do so, because virtually every Biblical concept used has ontological implications.

Is Tillich still speaking about the living God? He wants to hold on to this symbol (I, 241 ff.). Life, Tillich says, is the process in which potential being becomes actual being. This could obviously not be said of God, since in him the distinction between potentiality and actuality does not exist. However, God should not be called *actus purus*, either (I, 246). If there is not actualization, then God is not the living God. Tillich tries very hard to formulate a position that does not identify God with a static concept of being, does not portray God as the process of nature, and does not represent him as the "becoming" God. What, then, does the symbolic expression "living God" mean? Tillich himself states it thus: "If we call God the 'living God,' we deny that he is pure identity of being as being; and we also deny that there is a definite separation of being from being in him. We assert that he is the eternal process in which separation is posited and is overcome by reunion" (I, 242). Without analyzing this statement more fully, we ask, Is this "living God" the "God who acts"?

The issue we face here comes out most sharply in Tillich's treatment of the doctrine of the providence of God, or as he calls it, "God's directing creativity" (I, 263 ff.). Tillich sees faith in historical providence as the triumph of the prophetic interpretation of history (I, 264). Providence is represented as a permanent activity of God, but it is also said that his directing

creativity always creates "through the freedom of man and through the spontaneity and structural wholeness of all creatures" (I, 266). In other words, it has nothing to do with divine intervention in terms of supranaturalism. It can therefore be defined as "a *quality* of every constellation of conditions," or as "the quality of inner directedness present in every situation" (I, 267), or, again, as "confidence in 'the divine condition' within every set of finite conditions" (I, 268). God is eternally creative, and this means, among other things, that "through himself he creates the world, and through the world, himself" (II, 147).

These ideas concerning the 'living God' and the providence of God can hardly be fitted into any traditional *heilsgeschichtliche* viewpoint. There are traditional undertones. Jesus as the Christ is viewed as the "end" of history. Yet, history has not come to an end in the sense of "finish." Its "end" (aim) has been manifested in the appearance of the New Being as a historical reality. There remains a situation of "already" and "not yet" (II, 119 f.). The ascension is interpreted as indicating the finality of the separation of the Christ from historical existence, and it is said to be identical with "his spiritual presence as the power of the New Being but with the concreteness of his personal countenance" (II, 162). Yet, in the same context we read these words: "The symbol of the Christ as Lord of history means neither external interference by a heavenly being nor fulfillment of the New Being in history or its transformation into the Kingdom of God; but it does mean the certainty that nothing can happen in history which would make the work of the New Being impossible" (II, 162).

The idea of a universal history of salvation will be developed in the next and final volume of Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, which will deal with the themes "Life and the Spirit" and "History and the Kingdom of God." The fundamental perspective will undoubtedly remain the same. Tillich's "deliteralization" (II, 152) of the Biblical symbols, like Bultmann's "demythologization," is in essence an existential interpretation of the Biblical message. Both men have great difficulty with the notion of the presence and the creative activity of God the Lord in the world. Bultmann seeks to solve the problem by retaining the idea

of an act of God, but by limiting the sphere in which he acts in a revelatory manner. He concentrates on the kerygmatic situation. Tillich holds on to some of the universal perspectives of the Bible. He considers a radical distinction between man and nature appealing, but he regards it as a solution that is "too simple to be true" (II, 41). He speaks of the "participation of nature in history" and of the "participation of the universe in salvation" (II, 96), and thus retains cosmic dimensions in his theology of *ta panta*—all things—but then God's acting becomes "the quality of inner-directedness present in every situation."

When Tillich says that the divine mystery remains a mystery when it is revealed, many will agree with him. When he claims that God does not exist, that to argue that God exists is to deny him (I, 205) and that "it is as atheistic to affirm the existence of God as it is to deny him" (I, 237), many will accept this too, at least as a legitimate and necessary corrective to the idea that God can ever be approached as a being among beings. These things must still be emphasized in our day. It ought to be admitted, however, that the same lesson can be learned from the writings of many other scholars who still continue to use "supranaturalist" language because its symbolism expresses a meaningful Biblical truth concerning the nature and activity of God, at least as long as the mystery is indeed recognized as a mystery.

It is doubtful indeed whether the symbols of Tillich's ontology will prove to be able to convey the Biblical message in more meaningful terms than the more traditional ones, which adhere closely to the language of the Bible, while at the same time those who use this terminology recognize the need for "deliteralization." It seems quite probable that "God who acts" will continue to be a more powerful and persuasive symbol than "the quality of inner-directedness present in every situation." Tillich's brilliant works are full of profound insights, many of them of the greatest significance to those who are called to preach the Christian gospel today, but to abandon the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with the whole *Heilsgeschichte* which this confession implies, and in his place to accept Tillich's God of the philosophers—that to this writer would seem to involve a loss of meaning.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. John McIntyre, *The Christian Doctrine of History* (Oliver & Boyd, Ltd., Edinburgh, 1957).

2. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

4. This draft confession has been published in English translation by the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, N.J., under the title *Foundations and Perspectives of Confession* (1955).

5. *Ibid.*, Art. 14, p. 24.

6. Christopher Dawson, *The Dynamics of World History*, ed. by John J. Mulloy (Sheed & Ward, Ltd., London, 1957), p. 19.

7. Paul Tillich, *The Interpretation of History* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), pp. 255 f.

8. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Faith and History: A Comparison of Christian and Modern Views of History* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), p. 118.

9. John Marsh, *The Fulness of Time* (Harper & Brothers, 1952), p. 180.

10. McIntyre, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Reinhold Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

14. Jacques Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History*, ed. by Joseph W. Evans (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 38.

15. H. Berkhof, *Christus de Zin der Geschiedenis* (G. F. Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1958).

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 75.

17. A. A. van Ruler, *Droom en Gestalte* (Holland Uitgeversmaatschappij, Amsterdam, 1947), p. 28.

18. A. A. van Ruler, *Theologie van het Apostolaat* (G. F. Callenbach, Nijkerk, n.d.), p. 46.

19. Berkhof, *op. cit.*, pp. 73 f.

20. Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (The University of Chicago Press, 1949), p. 191.
21. *Ibid.*, p. vii.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 190.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
26. Nicolas Berdyaev, *Dream and Reality: An Essay in Autobiography*, tr. by Katherine Lampert (Geoffrey Bles, Ltd., London, 1950), p. 177.
27. Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History*, tr. by George Reavy (The Century Press, London, 1936), p. 114.
28. Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Beginning and the End*, tr. by R. M. French (Geoffrey Bles, Ltd., London, 1952), pp. 33 f.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
30. Berdyaev, *Dream and Reality*, p. 98.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
33. Berdyaev, *The Beginning and the End*, p. vii.
34. Berdyaev, *Dream and Reality*, p. 50.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
37. Berdyaev, *The Beginning and the End*, p. 51.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 224 f.
39. Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History*, p. 64.
40. Berdyaev, *Dream and Reality*, pp. 256, 29, 42.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 296.
42. Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History*, p. 19.
43. Berdyaev, *The Beginning and the End*, p. 177.
44. Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History*, p. 183.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
46. Berdyaev, *The Beginning and the End*, p. 209.
47. Rudolf Bultmann, *Essays: Philosophical and Theological*, tr. by J. C. G. Grieg (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1955), pp. 205 f.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 208.
49. Carl Michalson, *The Hinge of History: An Existential Approach to the Christian Faith* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), p. 237.
50. Berkhof, *op. cit.*, pp. 72 f.

CHAPTER I

1. G. Ernest Wright, *God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital* (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1952), p. 13.
2. John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 47.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
4. H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (J. H. Bos, Kampen, 1895), Vol. I, p. 41.
5. H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (J. H. Bos, Kampen, 1898), Vol. III, p. 200.
6. Gustav Weth, *Die Heilsgeschichte: Ihr universeller und ihr individueller Sinn in der offenbarungsgeschichtlichen Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Chr. Kaiser Verlag, München, 1931), p. 14. For the survey in the following paragraphs I am greatly indebted to this excellent book.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 8 f.
10. J. C. K. von Hofmann, cited in Weth, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
11. Jacques Maritain, *The Dream of Descartes, Together with Some Other Essays*, tr. by Mabelle L. Andison (Philosophical Library, Inc., 1945), p. 25.
12. Karl Jaspers and Rudolf Bultmann, *Myth and Christianity: An Inquiry Into the Possibility of Religion Without Myth* (The Noonday Press, 1958), p. 58.
13. This work is Vol. III in Ernst Troeltsch's *Gesammelte Schriften* (henceforth in this study cited as *G.S. III*), (J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], Tübingen). *Der Historismus und seine Probleme* dates from 1922.
14. Cf. Ernst Troeltsch, *Zur religiösen Lage, Religionsphilosophie und Ethik*, Vol. II in the *Gesammelte Schriften* (henceforth in this study cited as *G.S. II*), (J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], Tübingen). This work dates from 1913.
15. H. Faber, *De Geschiedenis als Theologisch Probleem* (N. V. van Loghum Slaterus, Arnhem, 1933), p. 25.
16. Ernst Troeltsch, *Christian Thought: Its History and Application* (University of London Press, Ltd., London, 1923), p. 39. Troeltsch had planned a second volume on the philosophy of history. This book is not the one he had in mind. It is a series of lectures, and Troeltsch died before they could be delivered in England. Under Baron F. von Hügel as editor, several scholars worked on the translation of this work.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
18. Troeltsch, *G.S. II*, p. 745.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 730.
20. Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), p. 35.
21. Cf. Troeltsch, *G. S. II*, p. 732.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
24. Troeltsch, *Christian Thought*, p. 34.
25. Troeltsch, *G.S. III*, pp. 68 ff.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
27. Troeltsch, G.S. II, p. 747.
28. Troeltsch, G.S. III, p. 175.
29. Cf. H. R. MacIntosh, *Types of Modern Theology* (James Nisbet & Co., Ltd., London, 1937), pp. 190 ff.
30. Karl Barth, *From Rousseau to Ritschl*, tr. by Brian Cozens (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1959), p. 227.
31. Troeltsch, G.S. II, p. 221.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 742 f.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 216.
34. Troeltsch, *Christian Thought*, p. 26.
35. Troeltsch, G.S. II, p. 14, "unvergleichlich genialer als Ritschl."
36. H. H. Rowley, *The Rediscovery of the Old Testament* (The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 14.
37. See James M. Robinson, "The Historical Question," *The Christian Century*, Vol. LXXXVI, No. 42 (Oct. 21, 1959).
38. Cf. H. H. Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
39. Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. by J. A. Baker (The Westminster Press, 1961), Vol. I, p. 37.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Cf. A. A. van Ruler's essay "Kerk en Verbond" in *Religie en Politiek* (G. F. Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1945), p. 71.
42. Cf. A. Weiser, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart), Vol. II, p. 112 (cited in an art. by Quell).
43. This is not the place to discuss *in extenso* the relationship between covenant and election. Does the election take place in the framework of, and in line with, the covenant? (Thus H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, Vol. III, p. 224: "The covenant is the road along which the elect will reach their destiny.") Is G. Ernest Wright correct when, over against Eichrodt, he proposes that election, not the covenant, is the primary category in Israel's faith and that the covenant is conceptual language for expressing the meaning of election? (Cf. *God Who Acts*, p. 36). Van Ruler, too, maintains that the idea of the covenant itself is through and through predestinarian in nature, for "the object of the predestination is the congregation, is the covenant" (*op. cit.*, p. 78).
44. Theodorus Christiaan Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, tr. by S. Neuijen (Basil Blackwell & Mott, Ltd., Oxford, 1958), p. 136.
45. See the very learned book by this Dutch scholar entitled *Als de goden zwijgen* (Uitgeversmaatschappij Holland, Amsterdam, 1948), p. 129.
46. Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik* (Evangelischer Verlag, A. C., Zollikon, Zürich), III, 1, p. 69. Eng. tr., *Church Dogmatics*, ed. and tr. by G. T. Thomson, G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, et al. (T. & T.

Clark, Edinburgh), III, 1, p. 65.

47. E. Stauffer, *New Testament Theology*, tr. by John Marsh (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1955). The phrase cited is actually the heading of Part II of the book, which constitutes its major section.

48. Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive and Christian Concept of Time and History*, tr. by Floyd V. Filson (The Westminster Press, 1950), p. 16.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

50. This is the title of Part I of his book, pp. 37 ff.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

54. See Karl G. Steck, *Die Idee der Heilsgeschichte* (Evangelischer Verlag, A. G. Zollikon, Zürich, 1959), p. 50.

55. Cf. Richard Reinhold Niebuhr, *Resurrection and Historical Reason: A Study of Theological Method* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), esp. Ch. III, Sec. 2, which is entitled "Heilsgeschichte: The Idea of a Non-historical History."

56. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

59. Cf. *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], Tübingen), 3d ed., Vol. III, p. 189 (art. on "Heilsgeschichte," by Ott).

60. Weth, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

61. Alan Richardson and Wolfgang Schweitzer, eds., *Biblical Authority for Today: A World Council of Churches Symposium on "The Biblical Authority for the Churches' Social and Political Message Today"* (The Westminster Press, 1952), p. 136.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

CHAPTER II

1. Hans Werner Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, with contributions by Rudolf Bultmann *et al.*, tr. by Reginald H. Fuller (S.P.C.K., London, 1935), p. 5. Published in paperback by Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. Quotations are used by permission of the publishers.

2. Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 36.

3. Rudolf Bultmann, "Heilsgeschichte und Geschichte: zu Oscar Cullmann, Christus und die Zeit," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, No. 11, 1948, pp. 659-666.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 662.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, p. 663.

7. Hans Werner Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma und Mythos: Ein theologisches Gespräch* (Evangelischer Verlag, Hamburg, 1952), II, p. 118. Cf. Bultmann himself to Barth: "My question is, what does Barth understand by 'have taken place as history' and 'history'?" (*Essays: Philosophical and Theological*, tr. J. C. G. Grieg [SCM Press Ltd., London, 1955], p. 260).

8. Friedrich Gogarten, *Demythologizing and History*, tr. by Neville Horton Smith (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1955), p. 10.

9. Rudolf Bultmann, *History and Eschatology* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1957), p. 110.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, p. 138

12. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

13. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of Hermeneutics," in *Essays*, pp. 234-261.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

15. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 51.

16. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma und Mythos*, II, p. 191.

17. Rudolf Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, (J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], Tübingen, 1954), Vol. I, p. 128.

18. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 52.

19. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, p. 117.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

21. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 193.

22. Gogarten, *op. cit.*, pp. 56 f.

23. Carl Michalson, *The Hinge of History: An Existentialist Approach to the Christian Faith* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), p. 27.

24. Thus also Heinrich Ott, *Geschichte und Heilsgeschichte in der Theologie Rudolf Bultmanns* (J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], Tübingen, 1955), p. 4. Geraint V. Jones feels that the importance of the existentialist concept of history to an understanding of the problem of demythologizing has been exaggerated by some, and especially by Gogarten. He attributes this to "the peculiar character of German theological controversy." (*Christology and Myth in the New Testament* [Harper & Brothers, 1956], p. 56, n. 1.) The fact remains that all other history, as well as all nature, is theologically irrelevant as far as Bultmann is concerned. The importance of existentialist history as an interpretative principle is therefore paramount and can scarcely be overestimated. It must be kept in mind that the exegete Rudolf Bultmann is the systematic theologian of our day. He works with a very rigid "system."

25. Cf. John Macquarrie, *An Existentialist Theology: A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann* (The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 161, and David E. Roberts, *Existentialism and Religious Belief* (Oxford University Press, Inc., 1957), p. 159.

26. Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen*, I, pp. 118, 139 ff. Cf. also Michalson, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

27. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, p. 100. Also, Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 30.

28. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, p. 136.

29. See esp. John Macquarrie, *op. cit.*, pp. 38 f., 100 f.

30. Heinrich Ott, who calls this concept of time "the systematic center of Bultmann's theological ontology," points out that his concept of time, insofar as it is a dimension of historical occurrence, is of a "punctual" nature; it is always momentary time. Cf. the article by the same author, "Objektivierendes und existentielles Denken," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, Juli/August, 1954, pp. 259-289.

31. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, Ch. IV.

32. For the following paragraphs, see esp. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, Ch. I.

33. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 3.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 10. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma und Mythos*, II, Ch. II.

38. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, Ch. II.

39. Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen*, I, p. 144.

40. For this and the following paragraphs, see esp., Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, Ch. IV. Cf. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 32.

41. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, p. 41.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 47. In a footnote on this page Bultmann adds: "There are a few verses in the Fourth Gospel containing the traditional apocalyptic eschatology, but they are later additions by the ecclesiastical redaction of the Gospel."

44. Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive and Christian Concept of Time and History*, tr. by Floyd V. Filson (The Westminster Press, 1950), p. 145.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

46. Bultmann himself claims that he was surprised at the reactions, for he had not expected the word "demythologizing" to cause such a storm of discussion, especially since, according to him, scholars and preachers were in fact applying the principle all the time. Cf. Harvey K. McArthur, ed., *New Testament Sidelights: Essays in Honor of Alexander C. Purdy* (The Hartford Seminary Foundation Press, 1960), p. 2. Bultmann's contribution to this volume is entitled "A Chapter in the Problem of Demythologizing," pp. 1-9.

47. John B. Cobb, Jr., *Living Options in Protestant Theology: A Survey of Methods* (The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 245.

48. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, Ch. V.

49. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 206.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 206 f.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 196 f. Cf. also Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma und Mythos*, II, p. 196.
54. Cf. McArthur, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 31.
55. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma und Mythos*, II, p. 199.
56. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), Vol. I, p. 191.
57. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 107.
58. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 68.
59. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma und Mythos*, II, p. 200.
60. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 64.
61. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma und Mythos*, II, p. 196.
62. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 69.
63. For a comparison, see especially John Macquarrie's book *An Existentialist Theology*. By stressing these similarities, we do not mean to imply that Bultmann has always been completely faithful to the deepest intentions of Heidegger's thought. Some would deny that he has, pointing out that he has remained preoccupied with *Dasein*, while Heidegger is ultimately concerned with the broader metaphysical question of *Sein*—being. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. by Ralph Manheim (Yale University Press, 1959).
64. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 23.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
66. Remarks in some of Buri's recent works have evoked the question whether he has undergone a radical change of mind and heart during the past few years. We shall not enter into this discussion here.
67. Cf. Fritz Buri, "Theologie und Philosophie," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, März/April, 1952, p. 122.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
69. Jaspers, who counts Bultmann among the *heilsgeschichtliche* theologians, and regards him as a member of the orthodox camp (*Myth and Christianity*, p. 38), defines philosophic faith as follows: "Philosophic faith is the fundamental source of that work by which man makes himself in an inner act as an individual before his Transcendence, stimulated by tradition, but without any rationally definable bond to any particular form" (*Reason and Existenz*, tr. by William Earle [Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., London, 1956], p. 141).
70. Karl Jaspers and Rudolf Bultmann, *Myth and Christianity: An Inquiry Into the Possibility of Religion Without Myth* (The Noonday Press, 1958), p. 78.
71. *Kerygma und Mythos*, II, p. 99.
72. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 111.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

74. *Ibid.*
75. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, I, p. 293.
76. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 41.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
78. Jaspers and Bultmann, *Myth and Christianity*, p. 69.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
80. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 41.
81. Cf. Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen*, I, p. 209.
82. J. M. De Jong, *Kerygma* (Van Gorkum & Co., Assen, 1958), p. 16.
83. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, I, pp. 301 f. (*italics* Bultmann's).
84. Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen*, I, p. 209.
85. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 78.
86. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 206.
87. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
88. Ott, *Geschichte und Heilsgeschichte in der Theologie Rudolf Bultmanns*, p. 142.
89. Gogarten, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
90. Michalson, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
91. H. P. Owen, *Revelation and Existence: A Study in the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1957), p. 53.
92. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma und Mythos*, II, p. 125 (*contra* Barth); p. 142 (*contra* Thielicke).
93. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 40.
94. Bultmann, *Essays*, p. 78.
95. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 84.
96. Rudolf Bultmann, *This World and the Beyond: Marburg Sermons*, tr. by Harold Knight (Lutterworth Press, London, 1960), p. 38.
97. McArthur, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 7.
98. Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen*, I, p. 208, cited in James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1959), p. 19.
99. Cf. Paul Althaus, *The So-called Kerygma and the Historical Jesus*, tr. by David Cairns (Oliver & Boyd, Ltd., London, 1959).
100. *Ibid.*, pp. 23 f.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
102. *Ibid.*
103. Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 12 ff.
104. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
107. McArthur, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 7.
108. Gogarten, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
109. Cf. Bultmann, *Essays*, pp. 273-290.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 287.
112. McArthur, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 7.
113. Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, tr. by Shirley G. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 9.
114. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. and tr. by G. T. Thomson, G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, *et al.* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh), IV, 2, pp. 60 ff.
115. *Ibid.*, pp. 105 f.
116. Emil C. Brunner, *Dogmatics*, Vol. III (The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 233.
117. W. Norman Pittenger, *The Word Incarnate: A Study of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ* (James Nisbet & Co., Ltd., Digswell Place, 1959), p. 132.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
119. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 120.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
121. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, I, p. 335.
122. Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
123. Macquarrie, *op. cit.*, p. 244.
124. Cf. P. A. van Stempvoort, "Het program van Rudolf Bultmann en de Hemelvaart in het Nieuwe Testament," *Kerk en Theologie*, Juli, 1957, esp. p. 151.
125. Cf. Hermann Diem, *Dogmatics*, tr. by Harold Knight (The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 339.
126. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, tr. of second German ed. by H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1928), p. 418.
127. Michalson, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
128. Cf. Macquarrie, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
129. Cf. Giovanni Miegge, *Gospel and Myth in the Thought of Rudolf Bultmann*, tr. by Stephen Neill (John Knox Press, 1960), p. 129.
130. *Ibid.*, p. 60. Also Ott, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
131. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, pp. 21, 31.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
133. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 6.
134. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, I, pp. 135 f.
135. Jaspers and Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
136. Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 51.
137. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma und Mythos*, II, p. 180.
138. Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
139. For the Old Testament, see Brevard S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1960).

140. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
141. Bultmann, *Essays*, p. 118.
142. Ott, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

CHAPTER III

1. Cf. Giovanni Miegge, *Gospel and Myth in the Thought of Rudolf Bultmann*, tr. by Stephen Neill (John Knox Press, 1960), p. 140.
2. Leopold Malevez, *The Christian Message and Myth: The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann*, tr. by Olive Wyon (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1958), p. 161.
3. See the essay by H. Fries, entitled "Mythos und Offenbarung" in the volume *Fragen der Theologie Heute*, ed. by Johannes Feiner, *et al.* (Benziger Verlag Einsiedeln, Zürich, 1957), p. 40.
4. Malevez, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 160, 155.
6. Louis Bouyer, *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*, tr. by A. V. Littledale (The Newman Press, 1956).
7. W. H. van de Pol, *The Christian Dilemma: Catholic Church—Reformation*, tr. by G. van Hall (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London, 1952).
8. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
10. Bouyer, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
13. Cf. A. M. Fairweather, ed. and tr., *Nature and Grace: Selections from the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas* (The Westminster Press, The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XI, 1954), Question 85, Art. 1.
14. *Ibid.*, Question 109, Art. 2.
15. *Ibid.*, Art. 3.
16. *Ibid.*, Question 113, Art. 1.
17. *Ibid.*, Question 112, Art. 2.
18. Christopher Dawson, *The Dynamics of World History* (Sheed & Ward, Ltd., London, 1957), p. 187.
19. Emile Mersch, *The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition*, tr. by John R. Kelly, S.J. (Dennis Dobson, Ltd., London, 1938), pp. 500 ff.
20. Fries, *op. cit.*, pp. 40 f.
21. Mersch, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 354, 360.

27. M. C. Smit, *De Verhouding van Christendom en Historie in de huidige Rooms-Katholieke Geschiedbeschouwing* (J. H. Kok, Kampen, 1950), p. 54.
28. Dawson, *op. cit.*, p. 284.
29. Smit, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
30. Dawson, *op. cit.*, p. 234.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
32. Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar's essay on "Eschatologie," in Feiner, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 418, 420. Von Balthasar's own attempt at formulating a theology of history, quite recently published in English under the title *A Theology of History* (Sheed & Ward, Inc., 1963), is worth calling attention to. We have noticed earlier the difficulty for both the existentialists and the sacramentalists to see a positive theological significance in the ascension. Von Balthasar puts strong emphasis on the mode of Christ's presence during the forty days of his post-resurrection appearances, which he considers the prototype of every other mode of his presence in the world. This presence he sees continued through the Spirit by way of the church and her sacramental ministry. He can therefore refer to the ascension as something "in the nature of a signing-off gesture, purely for our benefit" (p. 84).
33. *Ibid.*, p. 560.
34. For this section I am particularly indebted to the previously mentioned work by M. C. Smit.
35. Smit, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
36. Karl Rahner, in Feiner, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 211 f.
37. Jean Daniélou, *The Lord of History: Reflections on the Inner Meaning of History*, tr. Nigel Abercrombie (Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., London, 1958), p. 2. In the paragraphs following, the numbers between parentheses refer to Daniélou's book.
38. Gustav Thils, *Théologie des réalités terrestres*, I *Préludes*, II *Théologie de l'histoire* (Desclée, De Brouwer, 1947 and 1949). In the paragraphs following, the numbers between parentheses refer to these works.
39. Jacques Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History*, ed. by Joseph W. Evans (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 130.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
43. Leonard Hodgson, *The Doctrine of the Church as Held and Taught in the Church of England* (Basil Blackwell & Mott, Ltd., Oxford, 1946), p. 8.
44. Arthur Michael Ramsey, *An Era in Anglican Theology: From Gore to Temple* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), p. 27.
45. Charles Gore, ed., *Lux Mundi* (John Murray, London, 1891).
46. Cf. Lewis B. Smedes, *The Incarnation: Trends in Modern Anglican Thought* (J. H. Kok, Kampen, 1953), p. xv.

47. J. K. Mozley, *Some Tendencies in British Theology from the Publication of Lux Mundi to the Present Day* (S.P.C.K., London, 1951), p. 17.
48. Gore, ed., *op. cit.*, p. vii.
49. *Ibid.*, Ch. V.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
52. Ramsey, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
53. Illingworth, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
54. W. Norman Pittenger, *The Word Incarnate: A Study of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ* (James Nisbet & Co., Ltd., Digswell Place, 1959), pp. 99, 168, 259.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 132 ff.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
58. Cf. William Temple, *Nature, Man, and God* (Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1935), Lecture XIX, pp. 473 ff.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 483.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 184 f.
61. See W. Norman Pittenger, "The Sacramental System of the Body of Christ," in the *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2 (April, 1953), pp. 89-97.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
63. Pittenger, *The Word Incarnate*, pp. 4, 252.
64. See Pittenger's article, *loc. cit.*, p. 90.
65. Cf. Leonard Hodgson's article entitled "The Incarnation," in the volume *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, ed. by A. E. J. Rawlinson (Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., London, 1933), p. 400.
66. Smedes, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
67. Hodgson in Rawlinson, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 391.
68. E. L. Mascall, *Christ, the Christian, and the Church: A Study of the Incarnation and Its Consequences* (Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., London, 1946), p. 42.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
72. Pittenger, *The Word Incarnate*, pp. 248 ff.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 262 f.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 263.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
78. Cf. W. Norman Pittenger, "Christianity and the Eschatological," in the *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. XLI, No. 4 (October, 1959), p. 255.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

80. Ramsey, *op. cit.*, p. 4. Cf. also J. K. Mozley, *op. cit.*, p. 79: "Modern Anglo-Catholics, conscious of an inadequate appreciation of the theology of atonement in the *Lux Mundi* school and among those who were most under its influence, have deepened the theology of the Anglo-Catholic tradition by connecting it up more closely with the evangelical message of redemption through the cross."

81. Ramsey, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

82. *Ibid.*, p. viii.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

84. Stefan Zankov, *The Eastern Orthodox Church*, tr. by Donald A. Lowrie (Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1929), p. 32.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

86. Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church* (The Centenary Press, London, 1935), p. 11.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

90. Cf. Archimandriet Dionissios, *Russische Orthodoxie* (W. Ten Have, Amsterdam, 1947), p. 10.

91. Zankov, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

CHAPTER IV

1. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann's essay "Die Bedeutung der 'dialektischen Theologie' für die N. T. Wissenschaft," *Glauben und Verstehen: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], Tübingen, 1933), Vol. I, pp. 114 ff.

2. E. L. Mascall, *Christ, the Christian, and the Church: A Study of the Incarnation and Its Consequences* (Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., London, 1946), p. 83.

3. Cf. Reinhold Seeberg, *Textbook of the History of Doctrines* (Baker Book House, 1952 ed.), p. 282.

4. Paul Tillich, *The Interpretation of History* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 263.

5. Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, tr. by John M. Jensen (Muhlenberg Press, 1953), pp. 27-55.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

8. Th. L. Haitjema, *Dogmatiek als Apologie* (DeErven F. Bohn, Haarlem, 1958), p. 275.

9. Cf. H. van Oyen, *Theologische Erkenntnislehre* (Zwingli-Verlag, Zürich, 1955), p. 77.

10. George S. Hendry, *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology* (The Westminster Press, 1956), p. 58.

11. Prenter, *op. cit.*, pp. 192 f.

12. T. F. Torrance, *Kingdom and Church: A Study in Theology of the Reformation* (Oliver & Boyd, Ltd., London, 1956), pp. 48 f.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

17. Roland H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Beacon Press, Inc., 1952), p. 10.

18. Thus *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Robert Appleton Co., 1909), Vol. V, p. 577.

19. Cf. Otto Weber, *Grundlagen der Dogmatik* (Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, Neukirchen, 1959), Vol. I, p. 137.

20. See S. van der Linde, *De Leer van den Heiligen Geest bij Calvijn* (H. Veenman & Zonen, Wageningen, 1943), pp. 29 ff.

21. Donald M. Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments* (Faber & Faber, Ltd., London, 1957), p. 99.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Cf. G. van der Leeuw, *Sacramentstheologie* (G. F. Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1949), p. 74.

24. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. II (The Westminster Press, 1960), IV, xvii, esp. 9-10.

25. Torrance, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

26. *Ibid.*

27. E. Przywara, cited in G. C. Berkouwer, *De Sacramenten* (J. H. Kok, Kampen, 1954), p. 73.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 307.

29. Cf. W. F. Dankbaar, *De Tegenwoordigheid van Christus in het Avondmaal* (G. F. Callenbach, Nijkerk, n.d.), p. 37.

30. Neville Clark, *An Approach to the Theology of the Sacraments* (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1956), p. 76.

31. Cf. Van der Linde, *op. cit.*, pp. 178 f.

32. Baillie, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

33. Torrance, *op. cit.*, pp. 108 ff.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 113 ff., esp. p. 118.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

36. Cf. "Kierkegaard und die heutige Existentialphilosophie," *Theologische Zeitschrift* (Jan./Feb. 1951), p. 56.

37. Cf. Søren Kierkegaard, *Diary*, ed. by Peter P. Rohde, tr. by Gerda M. Andersen (Philosophical Library, Inc., 1960), p. 92.

38. On this question, see James Brown, *Subject and Object in Modern Theology* (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1955), Ch. III. Also, Hermann Diem, *Dogmatics*, tr. by Harold Knight (The Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 9 ff.

39. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

40. Diem, *op. cit.*, pp. 21 ff.

41. Kierkegaard, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

42. This booklet by Martin Kähler, entitled *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche biblische Christus*, was still considered timely enough to be republished in 1953 by E. Wolf, C. Kaiser, München.

43. F. Holmström's book *Das eschatologische Denken der Gegenwart* (Verlag C. Bertelsman, Gütersloh, 1936) was a significant contribution on this question. I have made use of it in the following paragraphs.

44. Johannes Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1892). In 1900 a second, revised edition appeared which was less a polemic against the systematic theologians and more a historical-exegetical study. In the preface, however, Weiss reiterated his view that the real root of Ritschl's idea of the Kingdom must be sought by Kant and the theology of the Enlightenment.

45. Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (A & C Black, Ltd., London, 2d ed., 1931), p. 358.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 399.

47. Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, ed. by R. O. Zorn, tr. by H. de Jongste (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1962), p. xx.

48. Holmström, *op. cit.*, p. 200. When Bultmann gave as his opinion that the dialectical theology meant essentially an insight into the historical nature of human existence, Holmström took this as an indication that the "unhistorical-timeless era" had come to an end (p. 323). At that early stage of the development he apparently did not perceive that Bultmann was working with a new concept of history, and that he actually was inaugurating the era of a most systematic existentialist theology.

49. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford University Press, London, 1933), p. 10. I quote with a certain reluctance from this translation by Edwyn C. Hoskyns, not because I could render the text more correctly, but because this is the kind of book which ought to be cited in the original.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 314.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

52. G. C. Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*, tr. by Harry R. Boer (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), pp. 25, 37.

53. Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

54. Emil Brunner, *The Mediator: A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith*, tr. by Olive Wyon (The Westminster Press, 1947), pp. 388 f.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 389.

56. Emil Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, tr. by Harold Knight (The Westminster Press, 1954), p. 213.

57. Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
58. H. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology* (James Nisbet & Co., Ltd., London, 1937), p. 314.
59. Brunner, *The Mediator*, p. 157.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 305.
61. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (The University of Chicago Press, 1951), Vol. I, p. 5.
62. Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God* (John Knox Press, 1960), p. 42.
63. Karl Barth, *C.D.*, I, 2, p. 50. When the *Kirchliche Dogmatik* (Evangelischer Verlag, A. C., Zollikon, Zürich) is cited, we shall refer to it as *K.D.* When we quote from the English translation, entitled *Church Dogmatics* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh), we refer to it as *C.D.*
64. Barth, *C.D.*, II, 1, pp. 620 ff.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 623.
66. Barth, *C.D.*, III, 1, p. 59.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
70. Cf. Barth, *K.D.*, III, 2, pp. 531-537, esp. p. 535.
71. Cf. Barth *C.D.*, IV, 2, p. ix, where we further read, "I have nowhere mentioned this, let alone attacked it directly. But I have in fact shown that it is made superfluous by the 'Exaltation of the Son of Man' and its anthropological implications."
72. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 37.
73. Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics* (The Westminster Press, 1962), Vol. III, p. 180, note 1.
74. Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, p. 123.
75. Brunner, *Dogmatics*, III, pp. x f.
76. *Ibid.*, pp. 212 ff. Cf. his statement on p. 217: "As Karl Barth's objectivism ends in a Biblicist orthodoxy, so Bultmann's subjectivism leads to a new form of docetism, that is, to a doctrine which denies that the Christ of faith was the real man, Jesus of history. Further, the reduction of statements of faith to self-understanding results in a failure to do justice to the theocentric character of the Biblical proclamation, the message of the Kingdom of God."
77. Emil Brunner, *Dogmatik* (Zwingli Verlag, Zürich, 1960), p. 264. In English translation the term necessarily loses something of its compactness and conciseness. Cf. Brunner, *Dogmatics*, III, p. 232, where the sentence is rendered thus: "A speculative ontology took the place of the existential soteriology based on saving history."
78. Brunner, *Dogmatics*, III, p. 60.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 425 ff. Also, *Eternal Hope*, Ch. 18.
80. G. C. van Niftrik, *Kerk en Theologie*, April, 1961, p. 99.
81. Brunner, *Dogmatics*, III, p. 372.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 427.
83. Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, p. 187.

84. Barth, *C.D.*, IV, 2, p. 37.
85. Brunner, *Dogmatics*, III, p. 232.
86. R. Birch Hoyle, *The Teaching of Karl Barth* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), p. 257. It might be noted in passing that Hans Hofmann concluded his sympathetic study on the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr with a similar question, namely whether the accomplishment of Niebuhr's basic purposes would not require a much fuller interpretation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit than is at present found in his works (*The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr*, tr. by Louise Pettibone Smith [Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956], p. 246).
87. Brunner, *Dogmatics*, III, pp. 3-335.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
89. *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 363.
90. Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, p. 59.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
92. *Ibid.*
93. Brunner, *Dogmatics*, III, p. 320.
94. Barth, *C.D.*, IV, 2, 31 ff.
95. *Ibid.*, 2, 107; cf. 3, 1, pp. 180 ff.
96. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 133.
97. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 319.
98. *Ibid.*, 2, pp. 322 f.
99. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 334.
100. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 620.
101. *Ibid.*
102. For this, see especially Barth, *C.D.* IV, 3, 1, par. 69, sec. 4, entitled "The Promise of the Spirit," pp. 274-367.
103. Barth, *C.D.* IV, 2, p. 332.
104. A. A. van Ruler, *De Vervulling van de Wet* (G. F. Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1947). Van Ruler has written on a wide variety of themes. Some of his works are devotional books, others are books on Biblical exposition, books on the sociopolitical and cultural implications of the Christian gospel, and studies on the confession of the church, the order of the church, and the apostolate. To my knowledge the following small booklets have appeared in English: *The Greatest of These Is Love*, tr. by Lewis B. Smedes (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958), which is a study on I Cor., ch. 13; *God's Son and God's World*, tr. by Lewis B. Smedes (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), and *Zechariah Speaks Today* (Lutterworth Press, London, 1962). The numbers between parentheses refer to *De Vervulling van de Wet*.
105. Paul S. Minear, "Between Two Worlds," *Interpretation*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (January, 1951), p. 34.
106. Cf. John Marsh's critique on Cullmann's book *Christ and Time* in an appendix to his own work *The Fulness of Time* (Harper & Brothers, 1952): "Fulfilment is the entry of the end of the process, and

therewith the revelation of its meaning, in the course of the process itself. . . . The Bible would have us see the end of history as occurring in its course, and as taking us back to its very beginning" (p. 176).

107. See W. H. Velema, *Confrontatie met Van Ruler* (J. H. Kok, Kampen, 1962), p. 12. This book is the first systematic exposition and critique on Van Ruler's theology that has come to my attention. References have been made during the past decade and a half to Van Ruler's works, especially in the Dutch- and German-speaking world, but to my knowledge no one had ventured into a direct confrontation, as Velema has now presented. The subtitle of his book is, "Thinking from the End." The work came to my attention after I had completed the preliminary draft of this section. In the writing of the final draft I have made grateful use of this book.

108. A. A. van Ruler, *Visie en Vaart* (Holland Uitgeversmaatschappij, Amsterdam, 1947), p. 149.

109. J. E. Fison, *The Christian Hope: The Presence and the Parousia* (Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., London, 1954), p. 58.

110. C. H. Dodd, who has been the prime exponent of the idea of "realized eschatology," contrasts the realm of space and time with "the eternal order." The supreme significance of history he believes to be in the fact that God uses it as the sphere in which he confronts man and calls him to decision. When the encounter takes place, history is said to be sacramental to the eternal order (*The Parables of the Kingdom* [James Nisbet & Co., Ltd., London, 1935], p. 208). In Jesus Christ the eternal order has entered time decisively. The New Testament, therefore, witnesses to a "realized eschatology."

However, "realized eschatology" still leaves room for a "residue of eschatology," namely the element of "sheer finality" (*The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development* [Harper & Brothers, 1936], p. 93). Dodd particularly objects to any attempt to move beyond the language of faith and to forecast the shape of things to come in terms of unsymbolic language and the categories of space and time.

Dodd speaks of the Word as an actual factor in history "shaping it in the direction of the divine purpose" (*History and the Gospel* [James Nisbet & Co., Ltd., London, 1938], p. 162). There is *Heilsgeschichte*, even though the triumph of the Day of the Lord does not lie in the future, but has taken place in Jesus Christ. The consummation will mean that the temporal order will be taken up in the eternal order. "That," Dodd states, "is the ultimate destination of the historical process" (*ibid.*, p. 182).

It seems, then, that this theology is not so much in need of a futurist eschatology, but rather calls for a more fully developed eschatological theology of the interim.

111. Cf. the use sometimes made of the ideas of "sign" and "seal" in the theology of the sacraments. The Belgic Confession, for instance, states, in Art. 33, that "the signs are not in vain or insignificant. . . .

Jesus Christ is the true object presented by them, without whom they would be of no moment." Paul Tillich contrasts "sign" and "symbol." "The symbol," he states, "participates in the reality which is symbolized. Therefore, one should never say 'only a symbol.' This is to confuse symbol with sign" (*Systematic Theology* [The University of Chicago Press, 1957], Vol. II, p. 9). In other words, here the sign is seen as pointing to something with which it has not inner relationship. Not so in Van Ruler's thought!

112. For this whole question, see especially, A. A. van Ruler, *Religie en Politiek* (G. F. Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1945), Chs. 1-4, pp. 15-68.

113. See also A. A. van Ruler's essay "Woord en Werkelijkheid," *Religie en Politiek*, pp. 110-122.

114. In a number of articles that I have contributed over the past years to the journal *The Reformed Review* (published by Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan) I have written on the socio-political and cultural implications of the gospel of the Kingdom, substantially along the lines of Van Ruler's theological outlook. I mention the following in particular: "The Kingdom and the State" (Vol. 10, No. 3, April, 1957); "The Church and the State" (Vol. 11, No. 2, January, 1958); "The Christian Gospel and Its Cultural Fruits" (Vol. 12, No. 4, May, 1959), and "Biblical This-Worldliness and Modern Secularism" (Vol. 16, No. 2, December, 1962).

115. Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

116. Will it, for instance, lead to the kind of "Christic vision," with its implied "Christology of nature," that was outlined by Joseph A. Sittler at the New Delhi assembly of the World Council of Churches? Cf. his article "Called to Unity," in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (January, 1962), pp. 177-187.

117. Roger Hazelton, *New Accents in Contemporary Theology* (Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 18.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

119. Velema, *op. cit.*, pp. 7 f., 81 ff., 104 ff.

120. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, tr. by H. de Vries (Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1900).

121. G. C. Berkouwer has entered this dispute in his book *Faith and Sanctification*, tr. by John Vriend (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), Ch. 4. Here the reader can find both a defense of Kuyper and a critique on some of his views.

122. Velema, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

123. *Ibid.*, pp. 104 f. It might be mentioned in passing that W. H. Velema wrote his doctoral dissertation on Abraham Kuyper's doctrine of the Holy Spirit (*De Leer van de Heilige Geest bij Abraham Kuyper* [Uitgeverij Van Keulen N.V., The Hague, 1958]). This sympathetic and yet critical study was written under the guidance of G. C. Berkouwer at the Free University of Amsterdam. In this book, Velema questions Kuyper's idea of history as a manifestation in time of that

which is from all eternity because of the divine decree. He wonders whether such an understanding of the decree leaves any room for real history (pp. 221 ff.). In his work on Van Ruler's theology, Velema offers what he calls his fundamental critique, and in this case, too, it has to do with the question of history. This time, however, it is Van Ruler's thinking from the end which, Velema fears, leaves no room for the novel and for a true *Heilsgeschichte* (*op. cit.*, pp. 49, 61, 98 f.).

124. For the foregoing, see A. A. van Ruler, *Theologie van het Apostolaat* (G. F. Callenbach, Nijkerk, n.d.), esp. Ch. 1.

125. G. C. van Niftrik, "Dr. Noordmans, theoloog des Geestes," in *Kerk en Theologie*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (April, 1956), pp. 82-95. A selection of Noordman's essays was published in German under the very appropriate title *Das Evangelium des Geistes* (E.V.Z. Verlag, Zürich, 1960).

126. Van Niftrik, *op. cit.*, pp. 86 f.

127. O. Noordmans, *Herscheping* (Nederlandse Christen Studenten Vereniging, Zeist, 1934), p. 123.

128. I refer particularly to the following two books by H. van Oyen: *Evangelische Ethik*, Vol. I (Verlag Friedrich Reinhardt, Basel, 1952), and *Theologische Erkenntnislehre* (Zwingli-Verlag, Zürich, 1955). Two Dutch professors began a critical discussion on Van Oyen's "pneumatocentric theology" in the journal *Kerk en Theologie*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (April, 1956). H. De Vos discussed the first-mentioned book, and G. C. van Niftrik, the second one.

129. Van Oyen, *Theologische Erkenntnislehre*, p. 93.

130. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

131. *Ibid.*, pp. 225 ff. In the preface to this book, Van Oyen states that he will discuss some Dutch literature a bit more at length in order that his readers in the German-speaking world might become acquainted with some of the thinking in Holland. However, strangely enough, despite a marked similarity to some of Van Ruler's thoughts published a decade earlier, the latter's name does not appear in the index.

132. H. van Oyen, "Gesprek over pneumatocentrische ethiek," *Kerk en Theologie*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (April, 1957), p. 106.

133. H. Berkhof, *Christus de Zin der Geschiedenis* (G. F. Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1958), Ch. 3.

134. *Ibid.*, Ch. 4.

135. *Ibid.*, Ch. 5.

136. *Ibid.*, Ch. 6.

137. *Ibid.*, Ch. 7.

138. Cf. R. Breek, "Christus de zin der geschiedenis," *Kerk en Theologie*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (April, 1960), p. 101.

139. Berkhof, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

140. After Berkhof's book had appeared in 1958, this writer had several opportunities to discuss its content with both these scholars.

The basic issue between them seems to be that of the relationship between Christology and pneumatology. Van Ruler finds the central mystery of history in the reality of guilt and atonement, and this view causes him to make the cross central in his theology of history. In view of this, Berkhof (*op. cit.*, p. 93) wonders why it is then said that history must not only be understood Christologically, but above all pneumatologically. Do they not form a unity? According to Van Ruler, this is true in a sense, but he considers it still doubtful whether one should say that Christ is the *meaning* of history. Does the meaning of history lie in Christ, the Mediator, the Savior, and salvation? Thinking from the end, must we not say that not the Mediator but man, mankind, and existence are the meaning of history? Christ is the absolutely necessary means whereby existence comes to its destiny. Without him, the meaning could not be materialized. God had his destiny for the world. Because of the reality of sin, Christ's work became necessary as an "emergency measure," as it were. Van Ruler's fear of a "Christomonism" comes out in all his writings.

141. H. Berkhof, *De Katholiciteit der Kerk* (G. F. Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1962). The numbers between parentheses refer to this work.

142. On this question Berkhof refers to his booklet *Christ and the Powers*, tr. by J. H. Yoder (Herald Press, 1962).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. See Bernard Ramm, "Biblical Faith and History," *Christianity Today*, March 1, 1963, pp. 5-8.

2. Eric C. Rust, *Salvation History: A Biblical Interpretation* (John Knox Press, 1963), pp. 35, 48.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 55. Rust's most recent work, *Towards a Theological Understanding of History* (Oxford University Press, Inc., 1963), ought to be mentioned. It is particularly interesting because of the manner in which the *heilsgeschichtliche* and the kerygmatic perspectives are combined in it. There is a strong emphasis on the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in the dispensation between the ascension and the Parousia, but almost exclusively in its personalistic aspects.

4. *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus*, ed. by H. Ristow and Karl Matthias (Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin, 1960).

5. Cf. Günther Bornkamm, in Rostow and Matthias, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 282 f. See also Bornkamm's article "Geschichte und Glaube im Neuen Testament," *Evangelische Theologie*, 22. Jahrgang (1962), pp. 1-5.

6. O. Cullmann, in Rostow and Matthias, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 266.

7. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, tr. by D. M. G. Stalker (Oliver & Boyd, Ltd., Edinburgh, 1962), pp. 108, 112. Cf. also his essay entitled "Das Alte Testament ist ein Geschichtsbuch," in

Probleme Alttestamentlicher Hermeneutik, ed. by Claus Westermann (Chr. Kaiser Verlag, München, 1960). This whole book is significant for the issues that we are discussing here.

8. Cf. esp. Wolfhart Pannenberg's article on "Heilsgeschehen und Geschichte" in *Kerygma und Dogma*, 5. Jahrgang (1959), pp. 218-237; 259-288.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 220.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 285 f.

APPENDIX: A NOTE ON THE THEOLOGY OF PAUL TILlich

1. The numbers between parentheses refer to Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, Vols. I and II (The University of Chicago Press, 1951 and 1957).

2. Cf. Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 1.

3. See esp. Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (James Nisbet & Co., Ltd., London, 1952), Ch. 2.

4. Cf. Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, tr. by James L. Adams (The University of Chicago Press, 1948), Ch. 7, on "Nature and Sacrament."

5. G. C. Berkouwer, for instance, presents in the same context a critique on the idea of a "general sacramentality" in both G. van der Leeuw and Paul Tillich. Cf. his *De Sacramenten* (J. H. Kok, Kampen, 1954), Ch. 1.

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